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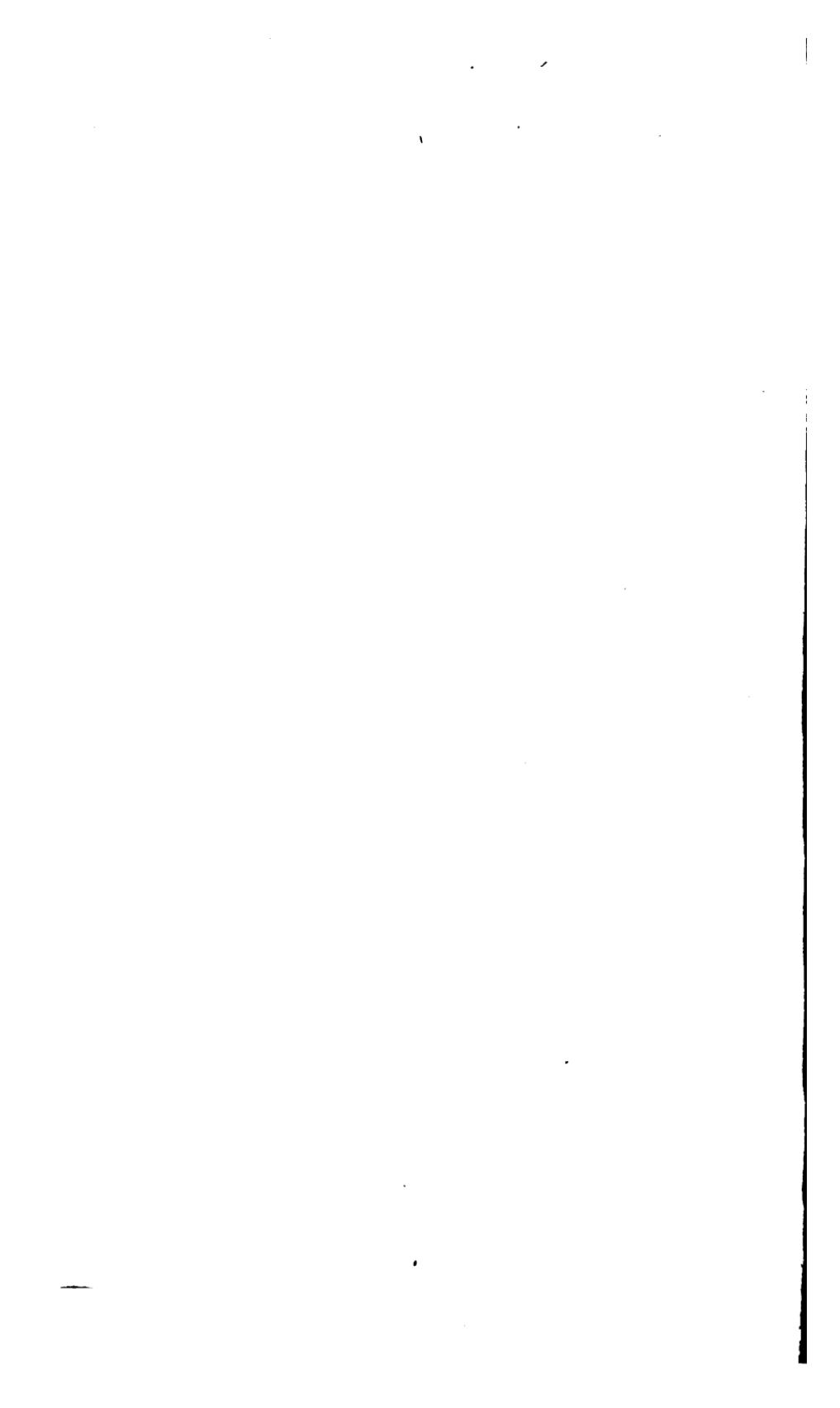


Maurice O'Connor

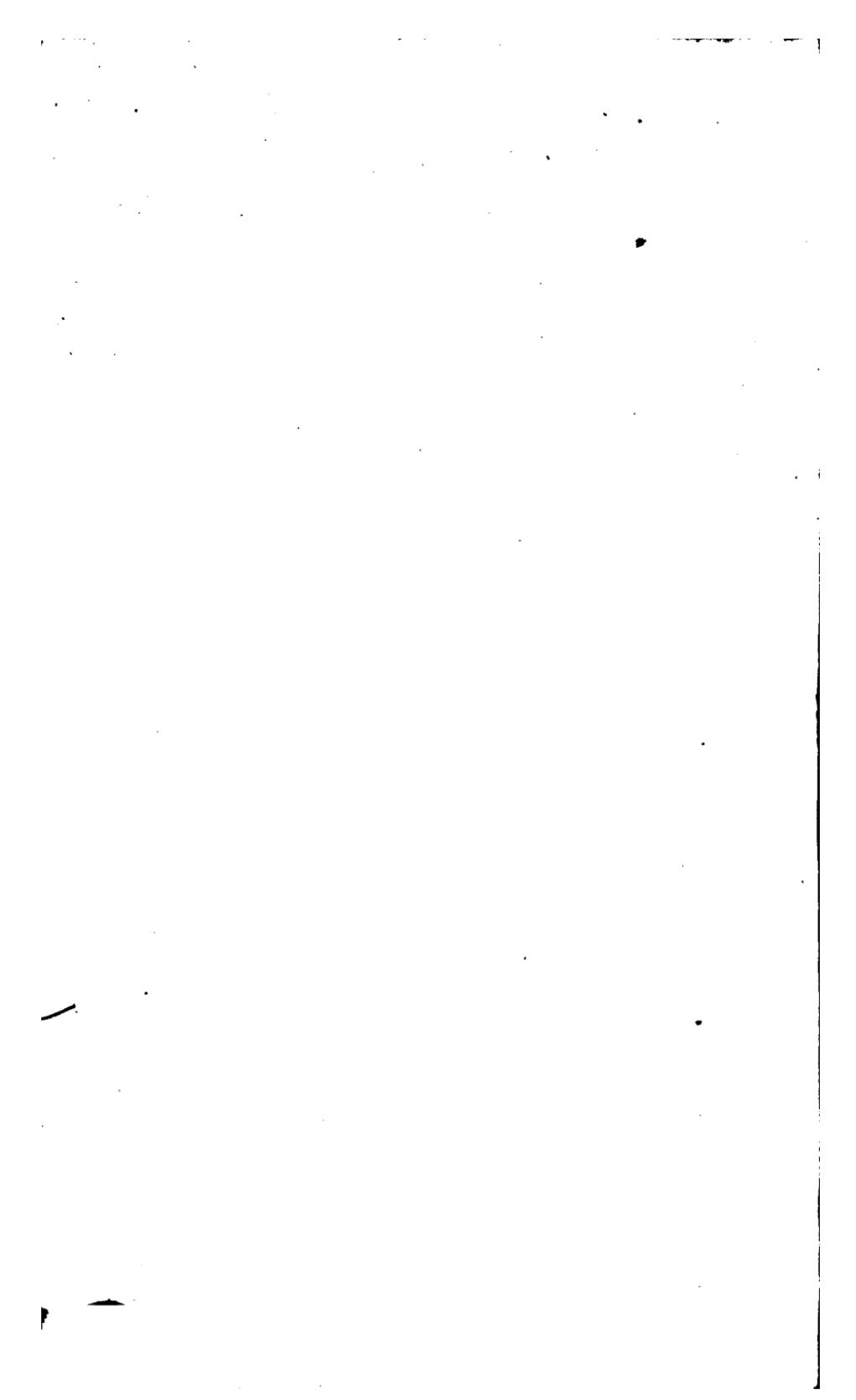
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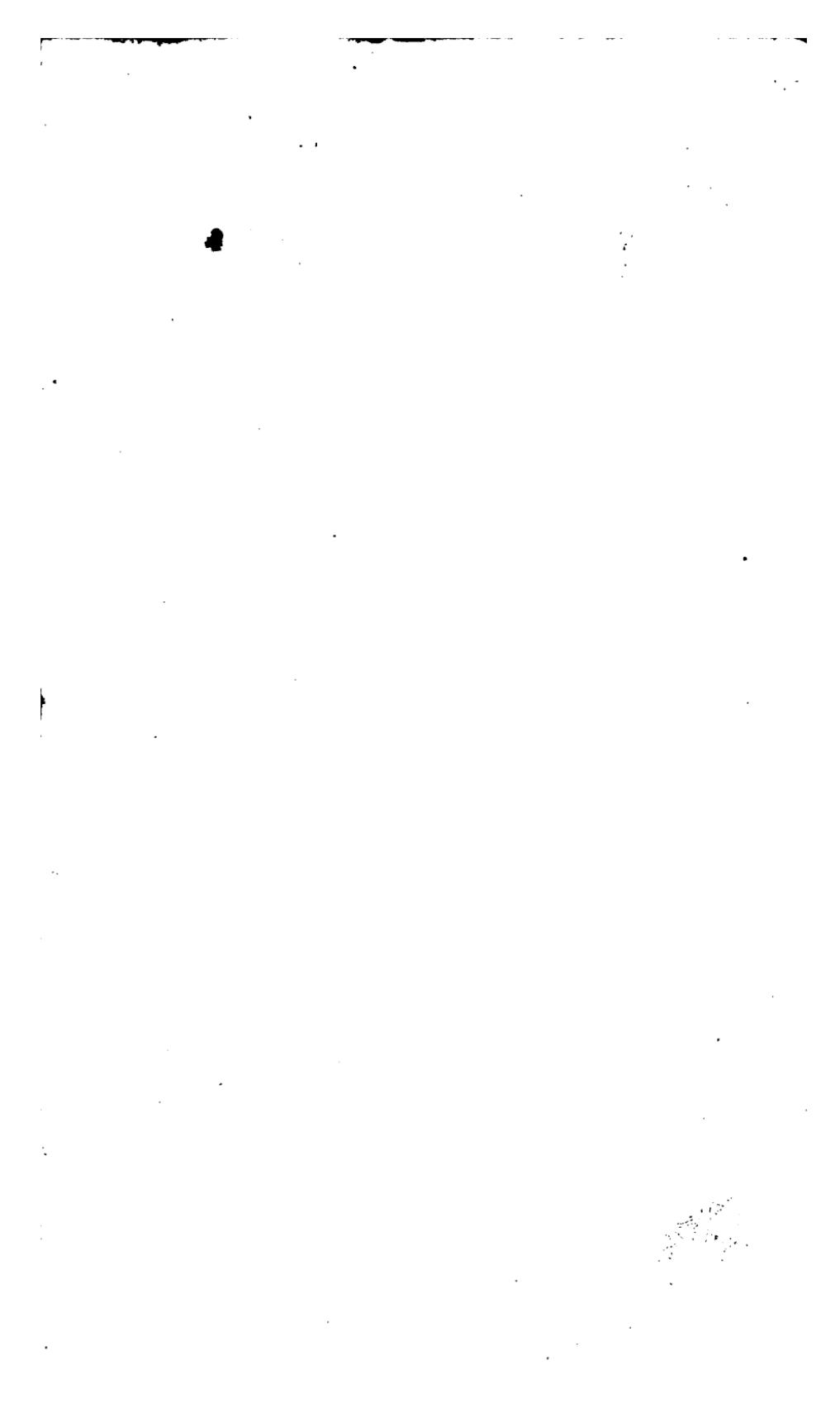
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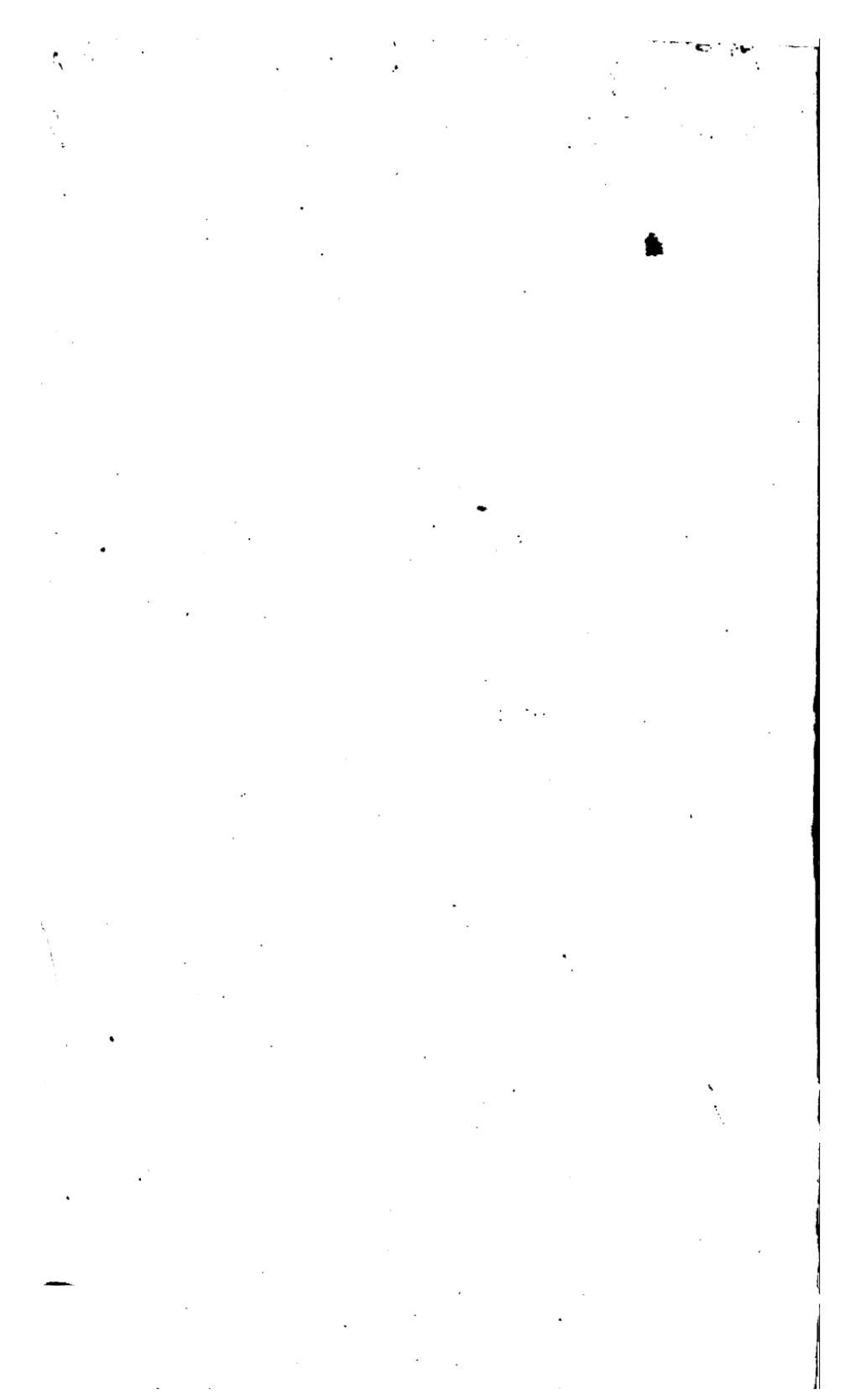
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(Doyle)







LETTERS
Charles James O'Connor
ON THE
to his brother
STATE OF IRELAND;
Maurice O'Connor M.D.
ADDRESSED TO
April 1826

J. K. L.

Boyle (James) Bp. of Killaloe and Lismalim
TO A FRIEND IN ENGLAND.

Justitia mirifica quedam res multitudini videtur, nec injuria: Nemo enim justus esse potest qui mortem qui dolorem qui exilium qui egestatem timet, aut qui ea quae sunt his contraria equitati anteponit.

CIC. DE OFF. lib. 2.

Popularibus verbis est agendum quum loquamur de opinione populari.

Idem.

DUBLIN:

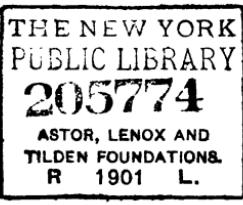
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1825.



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PREFACE.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR highly esteemed Letter of the 25th of June still remains without a reply. I already had the honour of acknowledging the receipt of it, and I then engaged, that as soon as my professional duties would allow me an interval of repose, I should employ it in communicating to you my opinions and feelings on the state of Ireland.

The very many subjects on which you desire to receive such information as I could impart, embrace nearly all the religious and political questions which agitate this unhappy country. I know how much confidence you repose in my judgment, from supposing, as you say, "that I am closely connected

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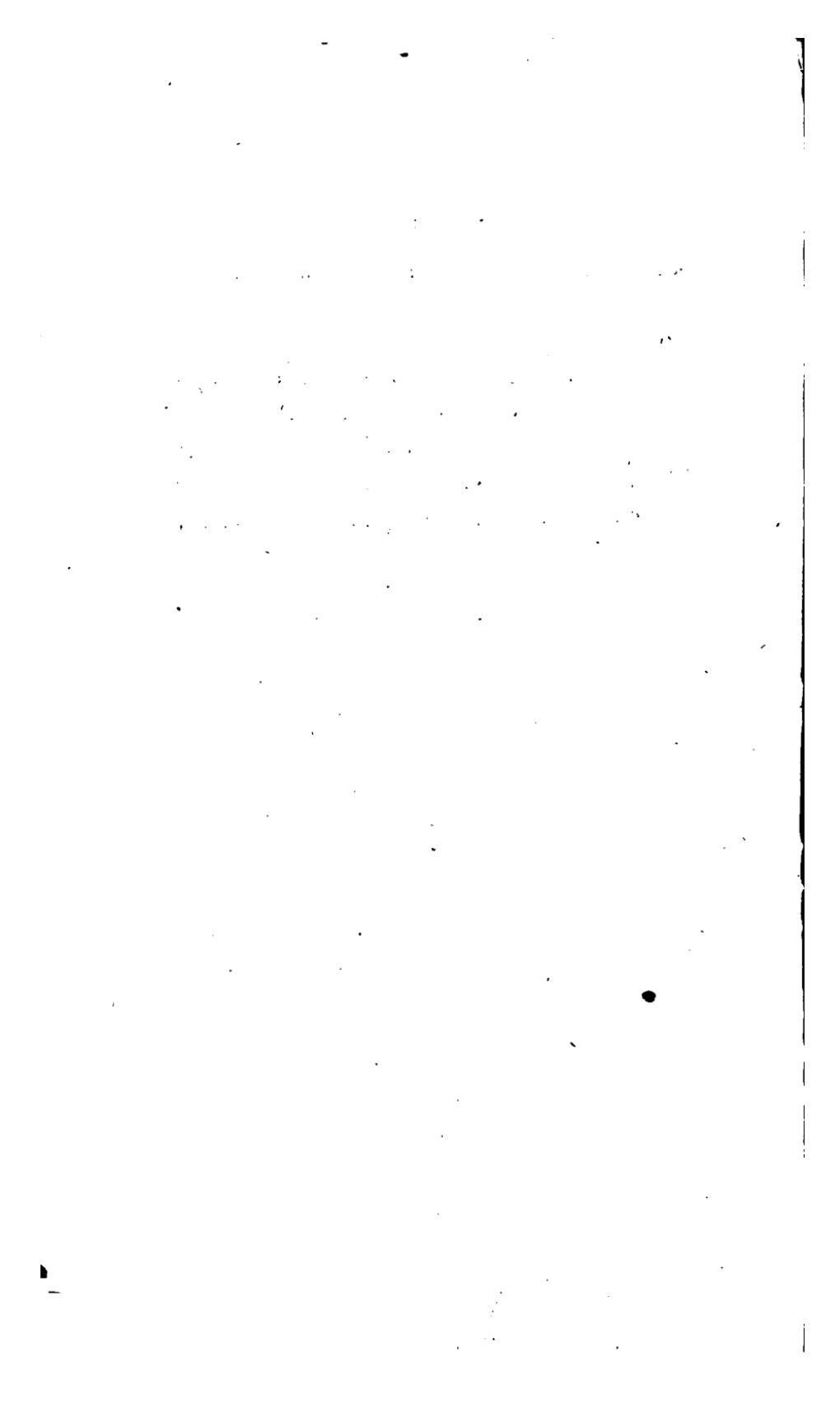
with the mass of the people, that I possess means of information inaccessible to others, and am acquainted with the opinions and views of those who exercise in Ireland a powerful influence."

I am inclined to infer from the above passage of your Letter, that you may value too highly the judgment which I am enabled to form with regard to the political condition of this country, and therefore, whilst I submit my views without reserve to you, I beg you may bear in mind, that I too belong to a class of men who are supposed to be rendered bigots by their profession ; that I have been bred up a slave, and imbibed from my infancy strong prejudices against the ruling party ; that my religion is only emerging from persecution ; and that my love of country, however laudable in itself, tends to inspire me with wishes for her happiness which perhaps cannot be realized.

You will therefore make a just allowance for such degree of prejudice and passion as you may suppose to obtrude themselves inadvertently upon my calculations. But I beg you may continue to be assured, as you have ever been, of my love of justice, of my abhorrence of religious feuds, and of my entire devo-

tion to the King and Constitution under which we live.

I shall here endeavour to reduce to certain heads the questions proposed in your Letter, and will offer such remarks on each of them as will, I trust, put you in possession of my sentiments, as well as of the grounds upon which I have formed or adopted them.



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LETTER I.

ON THE IRISH GOVERNMENT, ITS CHARACTER AND MEASURES; THE CONSTABULARY ACT, THE BURIAL-SERVICE ACT, AND TITHE COMPOSITION ACT.

MY DEAR SIR,

TACITUS says, that after the battle of Actium and the establishment in Rome of a despotic power, one of the effects which followed was, that truth became generally disregarded; some departed from it through ignorance of what really happened, others became indifferent to it through a blind passion of approving whatever was done by the government, whilst a hatred of those in power so filled the breasts of another class, as to render them inca-

pable of ascertaining correctly, or judging dispassionately of what occurred.

There are more points of coincidence between the times referred to by Tacitus and those in which we live, than would perhaps strike a common observer; Rome even then had begun to sink under her own weight, her liberties had perished with Pompey, her grandeur consisted less of power than of show, and before the demise of Augustus all her virtue was corrupted; "*omne vitium in præcipiti stetit.*" From that period the government of her provinces depended partly on the character of the prætor or proconsul who ruled them, partly on the decrees of the senate or the edict of the emperor, but much more on the genius of the empire itself. It was not only in Rome, but at Treves, at Antioch, and Carthage, that truth was overlooked, neglected, or entirely disregarded.

The power which rules this empire is now concentered not in the hands of one, but of a few; there is some analogy between the field of Wa-

terloo and the plains of Pharsalia, whilst the overthrow of the Cortes and their constitution reminds one of the tragic end of Cato.*

The East and the West have been casting their treasures into the lap of England ; her capital is the focus of wealth and luxury, and were Juvenal himself in London, he would exclaim of her, as he did of Rome, "*omne vitium in præcipiti stetit.*"

It is from a nation and a capital so circumstanced, that our Chief Governor has been sent, and like the prætor or proconsul in Gaul or in Asia, he has had extensive powers intrusted to him ; but all of them subservient to that one great—(I know not how to designate it) which presides over the

* The similarity which is here noticed, is not connected with any disposition in my mind to prefer the stratocracy of Bonaparte even to the Holy Alliance, or the anarchical constitution of the Cortes to the despotism of Ferdinand. Of these several systems I have formed an opinion ; but one which it is quite unnecessary for me to express.

destinies of these countries. His own character, as well as the laws, has had its share in the administration, and as to a just description of both or either, it can scarcely be expected ; whereas truth is generally disregarded, and ignorance, adulation, or hatred, mixed up with all that is published relative to the present government of Ireland.

Had I access to hidden sources of information, and was myself devoid of anger, of hatred, of fear, and of affection, I might describe to you the character and conduct of the Irish Government ; but I am no stoic, and public occurrences are the only means whereby I can form an opinion. To write a panegyric on the ruler of a country, and that ruler a man endowed with virtue and with wisdom, would not require the art or the eloquence of a Pliny ; but I feel no disposition to pay homage to power, and such an essay would not, I am well assured, be acceptable to you, or answer any of those ends which I propose to myself in replying to your letter. I shall, therefore, confine myself to a few reflections, from which you can easily collect what my opinions are, and my only wish in

communicating them to you, is, that they may assist you in forming a correct judgment of the state of Ireland.

Had our Chief Governor been sent here not only to administer the laws, but to ascertain and recommend such changes or improvements as he might deem necessary, I have no doubt but the character of his government would be like his own,—wise, liberal, and just. The man who in India reduced a chaos to order, who in Spain sustained a sinking nation, teaching its people to collect together and combine the scattered remnants of their ancient laws and constitution, such a man in this country would have trodden down all opposition to the public good; and even in the little time which has elapsed since his arrival, might have prepared for us centuries of comparative happiness. But his power was limited, and he who should have been commissioned to make the crooked ways straight, and the rough ways plain, was only sent to realize projects which were founded more on good will towards Ireland, than on a practical knowledge of her situation, or on

the character and wants of her people. He himself, owing to a long absence from the country of his birth, and the representations which had been made to him, was induced to conceive hopes *only*, which have all ended in disappointment. From the day of his arrival to this hour we see his power constantly assailed, sometimes shaken ; and we would often conceive it vacillating or falling, were it not that the energy of his character, and the vast resources of his mind, as well as an inflexible spirit of justice, appear to us at intervals, and afford a pledge of his constancy.

The character of his government is like that of a great man struggling with adversity, unable to emerge from the difficulties which surround him ; at one time he contends with them openly ; again he yields for a moment to their pressure, not willingly, but as it were to gain time, that he may combat against them with a better prospect of success ; he seeks abroad for aid, and is either denied it, or obliged to accept of it on conditions which impose new restraints upon his energies. Like a proud Castilian, he is always dignified.

Even when he petitions, his prayer is noble, and might be preferred in his own hall amid the busts of his ancestors. There is always an air of dignity about him, and though circumstances may oblige him from time to time to descend to those who are not his equals, they can never compel him to forget his title or his station, or to compromise his integrity, his honour, or his virtue.

Such a man is a just picture of our Government ; it is unable to alter the laws, or even to administer them with an even hand ; it has contended openly with a faction which *would not be conciliated* ; unacquainted with the people, fearing, or not being permitted to confide in them, it has yielded for a time to its avowed enemies ; it has been obliged to look patiently on the exercise of its own authority by a hostile party, which had no other right to it but what was derived from an unjust and forcible detention : the very council was said to be composed of men who could scarcely salute each other, and it would have been believed that two courts were about to be held in the king's castle of Dublin. Under these circumstances, a divorce

was sued for between law and justice ; but the bond which united them was found to be indissoluble ; they were obliged to take each other anew for better for worse, till death, I suppose, would them part ; and their house continues to exhibit from time to time those edifying scenes, which never fail to make a due impression on the children and domestics.

Like the two principles supposed by Zoroaster and Mans to rule the world by compromise, so these two powers have divided all our interests between them. The one takes the Church, the Magistracy, the Corporations, &c. &c. under its protection ; the other endeavours to execute the laws in the superior courts, and in such others as are not inaccessible to its jurisdiction. It is employed also in promoting commerce, in cleansing the public offices of immense heaps of rubbish or of nuisance, in advancing public works, and in consoling, where it cannot relieve, the distresses of the people.

This happy principle of compromise produces

naturally another blessing, namely, a most perfect division between the subjects of both powers; they hate each other with a cordiality quite peculiar. They interchange without interruption the good offices of lies and misrepresentation, and embrace cordially every opportunity of doing to each other all the evil in their power; both parties are assisted by angels of light, who, filled with a burning zeal for the honour and glory of their masters, discharge against their opponents all the shafts of calumny and detraction. Mutual hatred and contempt are with them the very bond of perfection, and they would almost drink each others blood, that they might be inspired with devotion.

Some persons are so wise as to suppose that these principles will yet coalesce, that one or both will change its nature, and the happy effects which now result from their compromise cease altogether. These wise persons are of opinion that no mightier power need interpose to prescribe laws for both, or rather to dissolve the compact, and enable the good principle to resume its sway. It is true, that many years in the life of a nation are

like a day in ours ; but though years should pass unnoticed, centuries of such happiness as Ireland has enjoyed under the present system would seem to be sufficient ; and it might be well to devise some mode of government better adapted than the present to the frailty of our country, and to the inveterate infirmity of her children.

Allegories, however, are not always easily understood, and it may be better to discuss in plain and natural language the character of the Irish Government, and to judge it by its works. "From their fruits you will know them," is a maxim of divine and also of human wisdom. Any administration formed in this country, could scarcely make things worse than they were at the time of Lord Talbot's removal. At that period they were not only the children of the great Irish family, who quarrelled with each other in obedience to the usual impulse given to them by their superiors, as Captain Rock so justly observes, but the rulers of the country also caught the infection from those below them, and be-

came engaged, it was supposed, in open hostilities. In fact, those of us who were not employed in robbing and murdering each other, or busied in some hostile intrigue or preparation, were seen in groups every where, like the Athenians in the time of Philip, asking, "what news? what news?"

When we heard, therefore, that the present Viceroy was appointed, we were all as much rejoiced as a young lady waiting in church, when she hears that the clergyman has arrived to make her happy, but who perhaps is only coming to wed her to the tribulations of this life. At all events we summoned up our spirits, we suspended our hopes and fears, and prepared to assist the Chief Governor and the Insurrection Act in going through the usual process of pacifying the disturbed districts. We heard that my Lord Grenville himself had been consulted about us; that Mr. Goulburn, who had made the last stand in the House of Commons against the emancipation of the Catholics, was appointed Chief Secretary;

we saw Alderman James created a baronet "without any compromise of principle" more than his predecessor in office ; in fine, it was formally announced to a county in Munster, that the laws were to be administered, but not changed ; and we sat down, such of us as could reflect, perfectly satisfied that though some new acts or after-piece might be introduced, the general design of the drama was not to be changed, and to this hour the great principle of unity has not been violated "*sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum, qualis ab incepto processerat et sibi constet.*"

There have been many efforts made by the Irish Government to engraft improvements on the old system, to correct its faults, to supply its defects, and occasionally to substitute one mode of proceeding for another ; but little success has attended these efforts, unless where parliament directly interfered, as in repealing the union duties, or in appointing commissioners to inquire into the mode of collecting the revenue, &c. in Ireland. Indeed, the very attempts made to administer bad

laws justly, or to induce corrupt men to surrender their prescriptive right to embezzlement, oppression, and tyranny, have produced such heart-burnings, such private enmities, and such vindictive retaliations, that a person finds it difficult to determine whether it were not better to continue all the ancient abuses, and let us live in Ireland as they do in Turkey, where the want of all right, as well as power, in the slave, makes him feel occasionally the kindness as well as the cruelty of his master. For my part, I am disposed to think that it would be better to leave a community in a state of rest, however unequal the condition of its members, than to provoke the ascendant portion of it to anger, by requiring of them to relinquish a dominion which the law allows, and to the justice or injustice of which they are perfectly indifferent.

Unless in Ireland the whole system be altered; unless the fundamental abuses from which the minor ones issue be eradicated, and the Government exercised for the good of the people at large;

there can be no peace, nor confidence, nor security, nor repose. No government seeking to administer the laws as they now are, can acquire the character of strength or wisdom ; it may be weak, or artful, or tyrannical, but it cannot appear strong, or wise, or consistent, nor can it fulfil the only ends for which power is given by God. The spirit and letter of almost all our laws, not only of the old penal laws, but of those which are every day enacting, are hostile to the people. To select one out of five hundred as an illustration, there is a law passed in the fiftieth year of his late Majesty, entitled, "An Act for enabling Tenants in Tail and for Life to grant Land for the purpose of endowing Schools in Ireland :" this statute, though evidently intended to favour education, is enacted in the same spirit which pervades the ancient penal code. It requires, as I am informed by one of those who are styled "learned in the law," that lands granted in virtue of it must be leased to the Protestant ordinary and church-wardens, and it subjects indirectly, if not expressly, the schools to be built

on such lands, as well as the system of education to be adopted in them, as also the appointment or removal of the masters, to the absolute control of the minister of the parish. The absurdity of such a provision is obvious, as in one half of the parishes throughout Ireland perhaps not a single child professing the faith of such a minister would attend a public school; but yet such is the law; and what can a Chief Governor do in the administration of such laws? Could he allow them to remain a dead letter, he might preserve the peace; but they will be put into operation even against his will; and his sole business seems to be to repress by force the discontent they generate, or to allay, by the influence of his personal character, the passions which they excite.

There is connected with the statute now noticed, a fund placed at the disposal of the Lord Lieutenant to assist in the building of schools; and the commissioners to whose management it is intrusted, require, by a printed form of lease, that the right, title, &c. of the school be conveyed, agreeably to

the spirit, if not to the letter of this law, to the persons above-mentioned ; and that the system of education, the appointment and removal of the master, be regulated by the will or caprice of the parson. No Catholic can build a school to be thus disposed of ; and yet it is most confidently and officially stated in parliament, that this fund is equally accessible to Catholics and Protestants.

The commissioners, as if to furnish the Chief Secretary with a plea against a direct charge of bigotry, and to screen the better the working of the system, have in the course of eight or ten years given assistance in a few cases, perhaps four, to Catholics, without requiring of them to execute the above description of lease. But even were the commissioners as well disposed as the Lord Lieutenant himself—and I believe they are just and honourable men—the statute places it out of their power to assist the Catholics ; whereas, from the settlements and entailments of lands in Ireland, it is next to impossible for these latter to obtain grants in perpetuity for schools, especially

in towns, unless by virtue of the provisions of the above Act.

I state these matters merely to elucidate my own opinion, that the Irish Government has not a fixed character of any kind. It is agitated by factions; it is not even united within itself; its temper and dispositions, as far as the power of the Chief Governor prevails, are in conflict with the spirit and letter of the laws; it has succeeded in some measure in pacifying the country by the usual means, but all the elements of discord are fermenting, and any trivial or unforeseen occurrence may now, as heretofore, produce an explosion.

If we take another view of our Government, and judge of it by the acts of parliament passed at its recommendation, we shall arrive at the same conclusion as when we considered its constitution and spirit.

To pass by the Insurrection Act, an old measure, and which is nothing else than force and violence legalized, we find the Constabulary Act,

the Burial-service Act, and the Tithe Composition Act, alone worthy of special notice.

The first of these is a law suited to a despotic government, or to a people rude and restless. I am confident it never need have been enacted for Ireland if the Catholics had been emancipated, tithes abolished, and a provision made for the poor ; but taking this country such as it was, not such as it ought to be, I consider that measure both wise and necessary in itself, rendered however, in its application, infinitely less efficient than its provisions warranted us to expect.

When it was first introduced, the distress produced by the transition from war to peace, as Lord Castlereagh used to call it, had scarcely abated ; and on that account the sons of decent and respectable farmers or dealers would have gladly composed the constabulary force ; such persons would have formed a body well acquainted with the country, knowing perhaps personally the disturbers of the peace, and fully competent to discover and repress every kind of disorder or

disturbance. But men of this description were not sought for, or where they presented themselves were rejected, whilst many others of a low description and of questionable character, were admitted, chiefly on the ground of their exclusive loyalty. When a selection of men for the constabulary was to be made in open court, the oral and written recommendations of the candidates frequently turned on their being loyal men, or the sons of loyal men, an appellation which those making the selection could not fail to understand. Hence the spirit of party was introduced into the body at the moment of its creation ; and hence the conflicts between the police and the peasantry ; the perjuries and bloodshed ; the trials and convictions, and acquittals, in which these men were concerned. Hence we are at a loss to determine whether the constabulary force has done more to preserve than to disturb the peace. Individuals of this force are occasionally punished, and in general they are kept under a rigorous discipline ; even many portions of them are most deserving, but the entire might have been more respectable, and party

spirit, instead of being repressed, would never have had existence amongst them.

If, however, this Act has not been as beneficial to Ireland as it might have been, that result is not attributable to the Government, but to those others who were necessarily employed in carrying it into operation. The faction, which is beyond the law in this country, must be broken, and their spirit subdued, or no law, however good, can be made to operate usefully to the Government.

The Burial-service Bill was a kind of remedial measure ; it reminds one of the bone thrown to Cerberus to engage his attention without satisfying his appetite, whilst the visitors passed unmolested to the shades below. This Bill, which in Ireland we attribute to the English Cabinet, was scarcely worthy of a statesman ; and proceeding from the Government, whilst it showed a laudable anxiety to conciliate, it betrayed a vacillating policy, which seeks to palliate evils whilst it fears to do justice.

The injury and insult offered to the Catholics under cover of some obsolete law, were as notorious in this country as the sun at noon-day. An affectation of doubt about the merits of the matter might possibly be credited in England, but here it was laughed at; we all heard, and saw, and touched the subject as it really was. The Catholics had been performing their funeral obsequies in chapels or houses since they were permitted to celebrate Mass; and as to burial-service, it has // ceased altogether with us. For two centuries we had substituted for it the blessing of a little earth or clay, which was put into the coffin with the body of the deceased, and served to keep alive in the faithful the memory of a more solemn benediction. Our rituals, containing the forms of our funeral and burial-service, are in the hands of all, and they have as much connexion with the prayers generally recited by the crowd who assist at interments, as they have with the Rosary or Penitential Psalms; yet these prayers were proscribed, the dead were dishonoured, public feeling outraged, and human nature was made to blush at the impiety of what was called religion. Yet even

so, the Government could not do justice. No : but under pretence of granting a charter of religious toleration to the dead, it offered unconsciously to the Catholic priesthood and people the greatest affront which they had received since their petitions were kicked out of the Irish House of Commons.

It was not this Bill, however, nor what it gave or took away, for we saw from the beginning that it would be a dead letter, which affected the Catholics ; it was the painful truth it disclosed which filled them with anguish : it showed to us clearly and unequivocally the place which we occupied in the opinion and estimation of public men, even of those who have been for a series of years the consistent and efficient advocates of our disen-thralment.

Whilst the Catholics, like one man, despised this bill—whilst their priests and prelates universally would rather be condemned to labour at some tread-mill, than seek a license for interment—a permit that the remains of one of their communion

should be gathered to those of his fathers in the vault or ground which his own religion had enclosed and consecrated ; whilst these sentiments pervaded our entire body, so little were they known or respected, that the organ of the committee who prepared this Bill, new-modelled as it was in England, did not hesitate to call it a charter of toleration, and to assure the parliament, with all the confidence of a friend and advocate of Catholic rights, that, if passed, it would *work well* ; —that this Bill would work well, which, in *no one instance, has ever worked at all!* This proved to us not only the evil of our exclusion, and that there is no one to represent our feelings and opinions in parliament, but that we are considered even there, and by our own friends, as a degraded class, who do not require to be treated like other men, and to whom, what would be an insult to others, may be offered as a boon. We discovered, by this Bill, how long and difficult was the way which remained for us to travel before we reached even to the threshold of that temple where we wished to worship with our fellow-subjects. But they are not the merits or defects of this Bill which I wish to

examine, I noticed it only as an illustration of the system of government which is here pursued ; a system which seeks to heal what should be amputated, and which abstains from doing good, not through a want of skill or energy in those who conduct it, but because they have not power to execute what their judgment approves.

I have read somewhere *nihil profici patientia nisi ut graviora tanquam ex facili tolerantibus imperentur*, and I am reminded of it, and of the truth contained in it, by turning my thoughts to that measure which is the most, if not the only important one, for which Ireland is indebted to her present rulers. I mean the Tithe Composition Bill ; a bill which, like a bill of discovery, exhibits to the world the enormous mass of wealth possessed in tithes by the Church, whilst it repays the patience of the country by aggravating her burden in proportion to the apathy of her people.

That Ireland should be oppressed and grieved, seems only a portion of her destiny ; that the mass of her population should have new bur-

thens imposed upon them in proportion to their strength and patience, is the ordinary course of things ; that one portion of Irishmen should afflict and persecute another, is the natural effect of the policy by which they have been ruled ; that our evils should continue to accumulate, is what every person versed in our history is led to expect ; but that the Irish gentry should have been so bewildered, so inattentive to their own rights and interests, as to suffer the Tithe Composition Bill to be enacted, and that at a moment when the evils of the tithe system had arisen to such a height as not to be longer tolerable, is somewhat calculated to excite our surprise.

But the measure has passed into a law, and I heartily rejoice at it. The peasantry are partially relieved by it ; the proprietor of the land not only has his income diminished by it, but he is brought into closer contact with the Church ; the value of tithes throughout the kingdom will be ascertained by it, and all who have eyes can see the glories of the Establishment. Only let the Church lands be now ascertained and estimated, let her paro-

chial assessments by vestries be placed before the public, and we shall see whether this mighty Babylon can be suffered to exist; whether this enormous mass of wealth can remain untouched in a country which has no exchequer, which cannot pay the interest of her debt, which has no public institution that is not sectarian; a country where there is upwards of a million of paupers, and one half of the operative classes destitute of employment. We shall see whether this *magnum latrocinium*, as it was called by Burke, be compatible with the exigencies of the State, the interest of the proprietors, and the peace or prosperity of the empire.

We may hear in and out of parliament special pleading and electioneering harangues proving the utility and decorum of this monstrous Establishment; we may hear of her ministers being all saints, and their children without the comforts of life, but we can refer, in reply, to the thousands and hundreds of thousands which she wrenches from the hand of industry. We may be told that it is the proprietor alone who pays her income; but the proprietor, in self-defence, will argue for

the inviolability of his estate ; and he will also plead for the seed, and sweat, and labour of his tenant, which are now overlooked, or entirely forgotten. The claim of property will be advanced ; and some lawyer, from his brief, will support it } against common sense and honesty, and without regard to the title by which it is held : but he will be passed unheeded ; whilst every man will see that the Establishment was created only for the good of the people, to provide them with religious teachers, to support their public worship, to clothe the naked, and to feed the poor,—and that it no longer fulfils those ends. The law will be advanced as the great safeguard of this mammon of iniquity in the hands of churchmen ; but the wisdom of the law and its justice will be questioned, when, like other noxious laws, it operates not for the good, but to the detriment, of the commonwealth. The excess of the Establishment, to be ascertained by this Act, must be corrected. Religion must be rescued from the plague of riches, her ministers must divest themselves of all characters but their own ; the absurd fiction, by which they are compared to proprietors, must cease, or the

real proprietors themselves must become vassals of the Church. For the commencement of this godly work we are indebted to the Irish government, and though it were their only merit, it should endear them to the people.

I have the honour, &c.

J. K. L.

LETTER II.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE object of this Letter is to give you some idea of the state of parties in Ireland, their composition, and ulterior views, and to throw some light on the character of our gentry.

When Cromwell was dying, instead of seeking to obtain mercy, he employed himself in mediating between the people and Almighty God. I have no disposition to imitate the presumptuous folly of this arch hypocrite. I shall therefore write nothing with a view of conciliating the conflicting parties amongst us; I shall only endeavour to con-

sult for the country, by presenting them to your view. In doing so it is necessary to

“——— despise the farce of state,
The sober follies of the wise and great,”

and to look with a simple eye at what is passing before us.

The country is divided into three great parties, the Orangemen, the Catholics, and the Government party, besides a vast mass of inert matter, or what Swift would call *prudent men*, who, solely intent on their own interest, whisper away the characters of all the others, pass judgment in secret upon whatever occurs, are never pleased with any thing, and are ready to pray with Cromwell, or cry with Charles, but not until the contest between them is decided.

The Government for a long time endeavoured to mediate; when it failed, an attitude of power was assumed: however it has been obliged to go down with its competitors into the arena, and fight for victory, if not for its existence. It refused to form an alliance with either of the other parties—

in fact it could not; hence, from time to time it has been assailed by both, and, as it generally happens to those who parley with enemies, advantages have been gained over it by address and ambuscade, which could not be obtained in open conflict. Endeavouring to steer a middle course by a way hitherto unexplored, it suffered occasionally severe reverses; and were it not for the occasional succour it received from old connexions and family alliances, it would inevitably have fallen into the hands of the enemy, and been obliged to pass under the yoke. It has profited, however, by adversity, and seems now to be recruiting strength. What it has lost in character it has gained in experience; it has become acquainted with the country in which its operations are carried on; it has stormed and carried some of the enemy's strongest redoubts; it has neutralized, by means unknown to the vulgar, some of the divisions which were opposed to it; it has a truce with the most numerous, though not the most formidable party; and should its measures in future be conducted wisely, and with a due regard to the interests of the community, it will doubtless gain very considerable advantages. Were the persons

connected with the Government perfectly united, and their Chief enabled to employ all the talents and wisdom with which he is gifted for the good of the State, I am inclined to think that our condition not only could, but would be ameliorated. If this party be not very numerous, that is owing, first, to the influence of the other two; next, to the uncertainty whether it will be suffered to wax strong, or whether the old system may not be revived at the departure of the present Chief Governor. Many persons also decline uniting themselves heartily with it, because it is NEW; for until now the Government and the Ascendancy were always identified. Another drawback from its strength arises from all those who are fond of novelties, being so engaged in the joint stock companies or religious societies, as to have no leisure to devote to state affairs.

It may not appear sufficiently respectful to the friends of administration in Ireland to class them as party men, but I mean nothing invidious by the appellation. In England it is no reproach to belong to a party—would to God it were a greater one there to desert it; and if in Ireland a party

man is rather an odious designation, it is because our parties do not oppose, but persecute each other.

The orange party are next to the Government in the paucity of their numbers, in their knowledge of court discipline, in the array of their responsible officers, in their legal forms and proceedings, in the formality of their attitude, in the show and circumstance of their dignity, in keeping up a standing army, in administering oaths of allegiance, in having a council of state, plenipotentiaries and envoys, with a public press to publish and defend their proceedings.

This party would be even stronger than it is, and more than able to cope with either of the other two, if it were not overbearing, haughty, insolent, and cruel. Monopoly and injustice are written on its standards, oppression is its watchword, falsehood and slander are its heralds; it has no reason or justice with it, but it is so clamorous, and so menacing, and so unblushing, as to overwhelm or confound whomsoever would approach

it with argument, or seek to treat with it on a basis just, useful, or honourable. It has suffered occasional defeats, but it has also gained advantages, and though every person can see how its resources are wasting away, though we every day hear of the defection of its friends, and see the straits to which the entire body is reduced, though confusion sometimes enters its ranks, yet it has not lowered a jot of its pretensions. The *uti possidetis* is the only ground on which it will treat; it insists not only on the recovery of its ancient possessions, but requires an indemnity for the losses it has sustained, and security against all future encroachments. Like Napoleon at Chatillon, it looks only to the extent and beauty of its former empire; it is not satisfied with the boundaries which even its friends would fix for it, and does not consider either the fraud, cruelty, and injustice, by which it acquired power, or that the whole earth is leagued against it, lest princes, during its existence, should have no security, or the people no repose. This party, like Catiline and Cethegus, has collected into its ranks every spendthrift, every idler, every punished or unpunished malefactor, every public

robber, and private delinquent, all the gamblers, all those whom gluttony or extravagance has reduced to want; in fine, all who love commotion, and who hope to live by corruption, or to rebuild their broken fortunes on the ruins of their country. The violence and insolence of this party, as well as their open hostility to the Government, has alienated many persons from them; it has neutralized others; but there is still a numerous class, who, though silent, are cordially interested for its success; a class which assists it privately by their money, their conversations, their innuendos, or by withholding their aid from the measures pursued by the administration.

There is also a large class of saints, or fanatics, another of conscientious Protestants, a third of traders in education, with almost the entire body of the Established Clergy, who, through fear or hatred of the Catholics, are induced to give their support to the orangemen: these classes form in appearance a neutral power, but constitute in reality the force which sustains the warfare in this country. If the Government, now that it has ac-

quired some solidity, only proclaimed, " **WHOSOEVER IS NOT FOR ME IS AGAINST ME,**" it would get rid of the most heavy and perplexing embarrassments, and could with perfect security proceed to those improvements in our internal policy, which the true interests of all classes so imperiously demand.

John Knox, as I recollect, used to say, after St. Paul, that all things were for the elect, and that the people were the elect; and thus by a false assumption and an abuse of holy writ, he arrived at a political truth; but one which is never reduced to practice. He would have it that Government should exist for the sake of the people, and not the people for those who govern them. The forms of speech to which we are accustomed sanction this mode of expression, and we may suppose, therefore, that the Government here is formed and carried on for the good of the community. The Catholics, therefore, who are, morally speaking, the people of this country, should engross the principal attention of our rulers; their interests in the state of Ireland should be consi-

dered like those of other subjects. Their rank, or station, or property, however respectable, should not be so much contemplated as their numbers; for just laws make no distinction in providing for the happiness and security of the rich more than of the poor. To treat of the Catholics, then, as of a party in Ireland, is not altogether correct, according to this theory; nor again, is it just in point of law; for such is the profound wisdom of our laws, that they almost ignore the existence of the people, and contemplate as subjects men who are nowhere to be found. But we must leave abstract right and legal wisdom to statesmen and lawyers, who know best the use of them, and attend to things as they are, believing, with Pope, that "whatever is, is right."

The Catholics then, under the fostering care of penal statutes, and quite unnoticed by the laws made to protect and foster the faithful subjects of this part of the realm, have grown at least into a party; a party so numerous and strong, that the dupes of Pastorini imagine they are to arise by some sign in the moon or in the stars, and cut the

threats of all who have not been lately at confession, without even allowing them the benefit of clergy. The more sane part of the community view the Catholics in another light ; they consider them as a mighty living mass, restless and agitated, capable of being reduced to perfect order, but also liable to be precipitated into some gulf, carrying with them in their fall the whole edifice of society.

This party is kept in a state of constant excitement ; they are goaded by the orangemen, they are insulted by the press, they are taunted with insult by the education societies, the distributors of Bibles, and itinerant saints ; they are stripped naked and almost starved by the Squirarchy and Church ; the legislature does not attend to them ; the Government cannot protect them ; the judges, who would not give a stone to them for bread, are generally inaccessible to them ; they are reduced to such a state, that thousands upon thousands of them look to death for repose, as the exhausted traveller looks to the shadow of a great rock in a land fainting from heat. Add to these

causes of excitement, the harangues of their own leaders, the recollection of their former greatness, the history of their country ; recollections "pleasing and mournful to the soul," and which are known by reading or by tradition to them all ; but, above all, we should add, their enthusiastic attachment to the faith of their fathers ; a faith rendered more and more dear to them by being daily and hourly reviled. When you have considered all these things, you may judge of the state of feeling which pervades the Catholic population.

This party has its organ in the Catholic Association, and it is well it has ; there is no man who knows the wisdom of permitting popular feeling to vent itself in declamation, who does not rejoice that at the present moment we have so many orators amongst us. A strong and almost universal attachment to the person of His Majesty and to the kingly office, is another great advantage we possess. The confidence also with which the present Viceroy has inspired the people, his well-known love of justice, and purely patriotic feeling, stifle many an indignant thought in their mind,

and restrain thousands whom the fear of death itself could not restrain.

This Catholic party embraces the entire of the peasantry, all the operative classes in the towns, it extends itself, with more or less of the feeling above described, to ninety-nine out of every hundred Catholics in Ireland ; it has its abettors in seeking for redress amongst all the wise and liberal men in the kingdom. There is no person of common sense, from the Viceroy to the peasant, acquainted with the state of the country, who does not wish to see this general feeling of discontent allayed, and the enormous mass of misery, as well as the numberless vexations from which it proceeds, alleviated or removed.

Should it be suffered to continue, should this party or this people, whichever it may be called, remain neglected by the legislature ; should their grievances be left unredressed—should their poor be left to perish—should their children be left a prey to evangelicals and methodists—should their religion continue to be insulted—should the agent,

and the tithe-proctor, and the church-warden, like the toads and locust, come still in succession to devour the entire fruit of their industry—should their blood when wantonly spilled go unrevenged, we need no Pastorini to foretel the result. We have only to refer to our own history, or open the volume of human nature, in order to ascertain it. A Police Bill, and a Tithe-composition Bill, and an Insurrection Bill, and fifty thousand bayonets may repress disturbances, but who can contemplate a brave and generous people so abused?—who can dwell in a country so accursed? What man can appear before his God who has looked patiently at so much wrong, or who has not contributed by every legal means to relieve his fellow-creatures from sufferings so intense?

But you will ask, are the gentry of Ireland so demoralized, or so inhuman, as to permit, or to inflict on the peasantry, hardships and privations exceeding human endurance?

It would be unjust in me to stigmatize our gentry as a class; I freely consign that duty, if

such it be, to those who have presided over the education of this gentry ; who formed the minds and moulded the feelings of their youth ; who preach to them the parable of the good Samaritan ; who are bound to be to them an example of good works ; and who have got a special commission to protect the poor and to heal the broken-hearted ; to say to all, with the Apostle, “Be an imitator of me, as I am of Christ ;”—I leave to them to intermix with their speeches and essays on tithes, philippics against this gentry, whilst I content myself with the more simple office of stating to you what an impartial and disinterested consideration of them induces me to think.



This gentry has as many grades as there were steps in Jacob’s ladder. Those of them who are possessed of large estates, and whose education and rank should lift them above local prejudices, and bless them with a knowledge of men and things, are, for the greater part, absent from the country ; they know not the condition of their tenantry, unless from the reports of their agents, some of whom, to my knowledge, are most excel-

lent men ; whilst others of them are unfeeling extortioners, who exercise over the tenantry an inconceivable tyranny, and are the very worst description of oppressors.

The next class of our gentry are the men of large fortunes who reside in the country ; of these there are many, perhaps a majority, who are truly good, who love their country, and are anxious to improve the condition of the people. Of this class there are several who cannot afford to make such sacrifices as would be necessary to enable their tenantry to acquire capital, or who have suffered their lands to be so divided and subdivided, as that extreme want arises almost necessarily out of the numbers of the people, and the want of capital to afford them employment. Perhaps there are some of this class who have joined the ranks of the saints, and are satisfied in preaching to the poor, that if they seek first the kingdom of God and its justice, all things else will be added thereunto ; not reflecting that this divine maxim, whilst it inspires a just hope in providence, does not exempt the peasant from his toil, or the landlord

from the obligation of furnishing to the tenant an interest sufficient to excite and to reward his industry.

But the great mass of our little squires, who are called gentry, are men of much pride and little property, possessing a few hundred pounds a year, God knows how acquired ; labouring perhaps to keep a carriage, if not, to have at least a dog, a horse, and a gun. They are made up of every possible description of persons. I could delineate them accurately and minutely, but I think it better to state generally, that a great portion of these men are the very curse and scourge of Ireland. They are numerous, they are very ignorant, they are extremely bigoted, they are exceedingly dishonest, they tell all manner of falsehoods, and so frequently, as to assume with themselves the appearance of truth. In a word, they could not be intrusted with your honour or your purse, and multitudes of them have no regard for the sanctity of an oath ; they are these men who often obtain the commission of the peace, and trade by it ; who get all the little per-

quisites arising from grand jury jobs, who foment discontent, who promote religious animosity, who are most zealous with the saints in distributing tracts and Bibles, who are ever ready to attend vestries, to impose taxes, to share in their expenditure, to forward addresses, to pray for the Insurrection Act, or any other act which might serve to oppress the people, and render permanent their own iniquitous sway.

These personages have been brought up under the exclusive system, and their very existence seems to them to hang upon it; they sometimes go upon their travels as far perhaps as London, and viewing from the top of a mail coach the surface of England, they talk most profoundly of that country, of her customs and institutions; they compare them with those of Ireland, and sigh so heavily at the distance in civilization and improvement which separates us from our neighbours "at the other side."

These men oppress, and aggrieve, and insult the people; they affect to look upon them as of

inferior condition, a conquered race, and whose rightful inheritance is slavery. They see the poor starving, but they see it unmoved ; they behold them naked without a feeling of compassion ; never having seen a peasantry enjoying comfort or independence, they have no idea of what their condition ought to be. Without exaggeration, they are the slave-drivers in Ireland, and very much resemble the beings of that description in Barbadoes or Jamaica.

I have the honour to remain,

Dear Sir, &c. &c.

J. K. L.

LETTER III.

ON THE STATE OF RELIGION, AND OF ITS MINISTERS, IN
IRELAND.

DEAR SIR,

I HAD scarcely finished my classical studies and had entered college, when I found myself surrounded by the disciples or admirers of d'Alembert, Rousseau, and Voltaire; I frequently traversed in company with them, the halls of the Inquisition, and discussed in the area of the Holy Office those arguments or sophisms for the suppression of which this awful tribunal was ostensibly employed. At that time the ardour of youth, the genius of the place, the spirit of the time, as well as the example of my companions,

prompted me to inquire into all things, and to deliberate whether I should take my station amongst the infidels, or remain attached to Christianity. I recollect, and always with fear and trembling, the danger to which I rashly exposed the gifts of faith and Christian morality which I had received from a bounteous God ; and since I became a man, and was enabled to think like a man, I have not ceased to give thanks to the Father of mercies, who did not deliver me over to the pride and presumption of my own heart. But even then, when all things which could have influence on a youthful mind combined to induce me to shake off the yoke of Christ, I was arrested by the majesty of Religion ; her innate dignity, her grandeur and solemnity, as well as her sweet influence upon the heart, filled me with awe and veneration. I found her presiding in every place, glorified by her votaries, and respected or feared by her enemies. I looked into antiquity, and I found her worshiped by Moses ; and not only by Moses, but that Numa and Plato, though in darkness and error, were amongst the most ardent of her votaries. I read attentively the history of the

ancient philosophers as well as lawgivers, and discovered that all of them paid their homage to her as to the best and purest emanation of the one supreme, invisible, and omnipotent God. I concluded that religion sprung from the Author of our being, and that it conducted man to his last end. I examined the systems of religion prevailing in the East ; I read the Koran with attention ; I perused the Jewish History, and the History of Christ, of his Disciples, and of his Church, with an intense interest, and I did not hesitate to continue attached to the religion of our Redeemer, as alone worthy of God ; and being a Christian, I could not fail to be a Catholic. Since then my habits of life and profession have rendered me familiar at least with the doctrines and ordinances of divine revelation, and I have often exclaimed with Augustine, “ Oh, beauty, ever ancient and ever new, too late have I known thee, too late have I loved thee ! ” With these sentiments, thus acquired, I come to write to you on the state of religion in Ireland, and to give you my own thoughts on the ministers of her worship.

The Irish are, morally speaking, not only religious, like other nations, but entirely devoted to religion. The geographical position of the country, its soil and climate, as well as the state of society, have a strong influence in forming the natural temperament of the people ; they are more sanguine than the English, less mercurial than the French ; they seem to be compounded of both these nations, and more suited than either to seek after and indulge in spiritual affections. When it pleased God to have an Island of Saints upon the earth, he prepared Ireland from afar for this high destiny. Her attachment to the faith once delivered to her was produced by many concurrent causes, as far as natural means are employed by Providence to produce effects of a higher kind. The difference of language, the pride of a nation, the injustice and crimes of those who would introduce amongst us a second creed, are assigned as the causes of our adhesion to that which we first received. These causes have had their influence, but there was another and a stronger power labouring in Ireland for the faith of the Gospel ; there was the natural disposition

of the people suited to a religion which satisfied the mind and gratified the affections, whilst it turned them away from one whose origin, as it appeared to us, was tainted, and which stripped worship of substance and solemnity. Hence, the aboriginal Irish are all Catholics, for the few of them who have departed from the faith of their fathers only appear "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto.*" To these are joined, especially within the ancient pale, great numbers who have descended from the first settlers, and who in process of time have become more Irish than the Irish themselves; every year also adds considerably to their numbers, not only, as we suppose, through the influence of divine grace, but also by that attractive power which abides in the multitude; so that were it not for the emoluments and pride attached to Protestantism, and the artificial modes resorted to for recruiting its strength, there would not remain in three provinces of Ireland, amongst the middling and lower classes, more than a mere remnant of the modern faith. These Catholics have for nearly three centuries been passing through an ordeal of persecution more severe than any recorded in

history. (I have read of the persecutions by Nero, Domitian, Genseric, and Attila, with all the barbarities of the sixteenth century ; I have compared them with those inflicted on my own country, and I protest to God that the latter, in my opinion, have exceeded in duration, extent, and intensity, all that has ever been endured by mankind for justice sake.) These Catholics are now emerging from this persecution, and founding their society anew. Like the Trojans who had escaped with their household gods to the shores of the Adriatic, or like the Jews after returning from the captivity, they are employed with one hand in defending themselves against the aggressions of their implacable enemies, and with the other cleansing the holy places, rebuilding the sanctuary, making new vessels for the sacrifice, and worshipping most devoutly at their half-raised altars. The recollection of their past sufferings are far from being effaced ; the comparative freedom which they enjoy is a relaxation of pressure, rather than a rightful possession. As religionists, they are suffered to exist, and the law restrains the persecutor, but it persecutes them of itself. They are obliged to

{ sweat and toil for those very ministers of another religion who contributed to forge their chains. Their hay and corn, their fleece and lambs, with the roots on which they feed, they are still compelled to offer at an altar which they deem profane. They still are bound to rebuild and ornament their own former parish church and spire, that they may stand in the midst of them as records of the right of conquest, or of the triumph of law over equity and the public good. They still have to attend the bailiff when he calls with the warrant of the church-wardens to collect their last shilling, (if one should happen to remain,) that the empty church may have a stove, the clerk a surplice, the communion-table elements to be sanctified, though perhaps there be no one to partake of them ; they have also to pay a singer and a sexton, but not to toll a bell for them, with a school-master, perhaps, but one who can teach the lilies how to grow, as he has no pupils. Such is their condition ; whilst some half-thatched cabin or unfurnished house collects them on Sundays to render thanks to God for even these blessings, and to tell their woes to heaven.

Such is the condition of them all, as far as relates to the positive penalties still inflicted by the law; for they do not complain of a Burial-service Bill, which grants them a charter of toleration for their dead, founded on the degradation of the living; they are sensible of the clemency by which their places of worship and their priesthood have obtained a sort of legal existence. They are grateful that of these latter *a moiety* not of what their wants require, but of those whom they are enabled to support, are educated for them at the public expense; and though these be liable in certain cases to the most severe penalties—though the laws pass them by as *pastors*, and suppose, most wisely, that the men who clothe themselves with the fleece also tend the flock, yet this mistake the people patiently overlook. They still, indeed, see their faith in direct opposition to their interest, but they are satisfied to endure this species of persecution, when they reflect on that other from which they have been mercifully freed.

The religious feelings of this people are quite intense, having suffered so much for the faith,

they consider it the most precious portion of their inheritance, and would willingly undergo new centuries of trials and privations to preserve it. They set so high a value on it, as to consider not only that the just man lives by it, but they sometimes even substitute it for justice itself. It is not unusual to see individuals of them return occasionally to the savage habits generated in them by the penal laws, or to hear them glory in the profession of their religion, whilst they dishonour it by the most criminal excesses.

There is also reason to suppose, that they dislike the religion which is allied to the persecution they have undergone, in proportion as they are attached to that which sustained them under its pressure; and until every vestige of injustice towards their own creed is worn away, their aversion to that which the law sanctions is likely to continue.

The ministers of the Catholic religion are invited to their office by the impulse of divine grace, but as the Almighty disposes all things wisely,

he makes use of external things to determine the will of those who deliberate on entering the ministry. This ministry is seen amongst us encompassed by dangers and privations of no ordinary kind ; labour and toil are inseparable from it ; the necessaries of life which it offers are to be obtained by soliciting contributions from men a vast majority of whom are unable to bestow them. When the youthful mind is deliberating on the choice of a state of life the flesh lusteth against the spirit ; and if the person in whom grace and nature are thus contending, have before him worldly prospects of even a moderate kind, he will generally be deaf to the breathings of the spirit, and prefer some secular pursuit to the service of the Church. There will be some exceptions to every general rule, and so there are to this ; but whilst the clerical profession rests for support on the precarious bounty of an impoverished people, and is beset with cares and dangers, such as now attend it, its members will chiefly consist of those to whom the world opened no easy road to affluence, to fortune, or to fame.

The ministers of this religion, however, are in general well stored with classical and scholastic knowledge, less refined, perhaps, than persons who are unacquainted with their vocations might desire, but not deficient, certainly, in those qualifications which the parochial clergy of a young nation (for such Ireland may be deemed) should possess. They are energetic, active, laborious, shrewd, and intelligent; they are the most moral class of persons not only in this country, but, I think, existing on the earth: they are exact, or rather, they are filled with zeal, in the discharge of their duties; their office, their connexions, their necessary habits of intercourse, mix them up and identify them with the people; they are acquainted with, and take an interest in, the domestic concerns of almost every family; they possess the full and entire confidence of their flocks; they are always employed; there is nothing dull or quiescent about them. Such are the ministers of the Catholic religion in Ireland; a class of men, who either direct the general feelings of the people, or who run with the current in whatsoever direction it may set.

From these observations you may easily infer, that the state of religion amongst the Catholics is rapidly improving, that their piety is becoming enlightened, and that good works are gradually engraving on their faith. The vexations, the insults, the injuries, to which their religious profession has been exposed, or is still subjected, the extreme poverty under which they labour, the party spirit which, like a fiend, continues to agitate the whole frame of our society, may retard or impede the progress of religion amongst them ; but if these evils should be lessened or removed, I can unhesitatingly assure you, that, in the department of piety and all the sublimer virtues, there will be a regular and marked increase throughout the Catholic people of Ireland.

Of the state of religion amongst the Presbyterians I know but little, and I regret that I have not had more opportunities of making myself acquainted with the principles and practice of that respectable people, as well as with the character of their clergy. From the inquiries I have made, I am inclined to think favourably of them ; for though I am told that in Belfast, like in Geneva, there

is a great latitude of belief allowed, still in moral and social virtue the Presbyterian has by no means degenerated. Their numbers, I believe, is stationary, making a due allowance for the increase of population. The Methodists, with the several sub-denominations of dissenters, might be said, in a certain sense, to be falling into disrepute ; the cry of Church in Danger, which has been incessantly rung through the country for the last two or three years ; the several attacks made from the high places, and by the profane, upon the wealth and indolence of the parsons ; the charges of their prelates, the example of the other religionists, particularly of the Catholic Clergy, has not only awakened the dormant energies of the Establishment, but it has brought back from the conventicle many a strayed sheep. This should be to every person who wishes well to society, a subject of congratulation, as it is painful and humiliating to see our fellow-creatures so bewildered as to exchange any regular form of Christian worship, however imperfect, for the ravings of their own fancy, or the wild and fantastical canting of some self-sanctified enthusiast.

What, however, is much to be regretted is, that these dissenters have been allowed to transfer to the Church the errors of their sect, and that the external union which we can observe, is the effect of compromise rather than the fruit of conversion. There are wild and heterodox opinions broached often by the very ministers of the Establishment, and her creed is no longer the creed of a great proportion of those who fill her pulpits, or who bend before her altars. There has been no period since the accession of Elizabeth, when so great a latitude of opinion was indulged in by those who belong nominally to the Church ; not only is each person allowed to abound in his own sense, but it is deemed a sort of duty to God to disregard all authority in defining what should be believed, or regulating what ought to be practised.

These observations lead imperceptibly to the consideration of the state of religion in the Established Church, a state which it is somewhat difficult accurately to describe.

The Church in Ireland has always partaken

more of a political than a religious establishment ; she was planted here by force in a soil no way congenial to her ; but that force which planted her threw over her the shield of its protection. It gave to her an immense share of the spoils of the country, it preserved her possessions, that in them, as in some happy valley, the children of the State might be fed and educated. All the retainers of the great paid obeisance to her, and she was always looked on, not as the spouse of the Redeemer, but as the handmaid of the Ascendancy.

The latter, whenever she became insolent, or forgot her rank, (if rank it could be called,) rebuked her into a deportment becoming her situation. They extend their protection to her for their own advantage only ; and she, working alternately on their hopes and fears, continues to hold her place as a necessary appendage of the family to which she owes her existence. When indulged she is indolent ; when rebuked, she becomes attentive ; she draws tight, or relaxes her discipline, as it may please, or be permitted by her masters ; her eye is ever fixed upon her own interests, and she

deems nothing forbidden or unhallowed which can serve to promote them. As these who do an injury never can forgive, she is implacable in her hostility to the Church which she supplanted ; and at this day she appears indifferent to all things else, but to the concealment of her riches and the persecution of Popery.

She occasionally revolts against her fellow-servants, who lay bare her spoils, who tell of her frauds and oppressions, who remind her of her origin, and upbraid her with the profligacy of her mispent life ; but she is much more frequently employed in forming offensive and defensive leagues with her fellows in the corporations, showing the advantages of injustice and oppression, in confounding the charter of her servitude with the title-deeds of her employers, in asserting her claim to **A TITHE OF THE LAND AND LABOUR OF THE KINGDOM**, and proving to the satisfaction of a Christian community, that though she receives the patrimony of the poor, she is not bound to exercise towards them a single act of mercy. When pressed on or confounded, she cries “ wolf, wolf,”

and assures the dupes who assemble, that the Pope was about to devour her !

You may easily suppose that in a Church so occupied religion does not flourish, but you are not to form a hasty opinion on this matter. Religion is as much an affection of the heart as a sentiment of the mind ; it is, therefore, nearly allied to passion ; and fear, and hope, and emulation, especially if allied to enthusiasm, produce effects similar to those produced by the purest piety or most disinterested zeal. Great numbers of Methodists and fanatics have crept into the Church ; these propagate their own enthusiasm. The fear of losing their accustomed influence, of seeing their own riches exposed, and their possessions new modelled, this fear, joined with the hope of resisting the spirit of justice and of inquiry which is abroad, have aroused the selfishness, if not the zeal, of others ; and a pride inherent in every corporate body animates the entire of the Clergy to free themselves from the reproach of indolence, and even to increase, if it were possible, the number of their followers.

There is, for these reasons, more of form, more of regular attendance at Church, more of clerical decorum, and of a disposition to make proselytes, amongst the ministers of the Establishment, than have been observable for many years. Yet the number of their followers has not increased, unless by their union with the Methodists, and has by no means grown in a direct ratio with the population of the country. On the contrary, it has remained stationary, whilst the number of the Catholics has prodigiously increased. There were probably as many members of the Church established in Ireland in the time of Chesterfield, as there are at the present day ; and were it not for the regular supplies furnished to her by the Foundling Hospital, the charter schools, the military schools, with the long catalogue of the institutions and asylums supported for her sole and separate use, by the public purse ; were it not for these causes, added to the orthodox zeal of individuals, all the favour, and all the patronage, and all the wealth, and all the monopoly, which she and her adherents have possessed, would not be sufficient to preserve to her any portion of the less fortunate of her followers. They

all seem to follow her, as Iago did his master, that they may serve their purpose on her ; and as soon as they cease to hope or gain by her, they exchange her cold costume for the more warm or substantial worship of those who either have a religion without a Church, or a Church without a religion. It is not unusual to find the old Protestant who for years has been as regular an attendant at church as the sexton, and in some cases the sexton himself when he has closed his accounts with this world, and has no more to expect from the parson, to send for the priest, in order to settle with him the affairs of that other world to which he is about to depart : it has passed into a proverb with a certain class amongst us, that for a man to be happy in this world and the next, he should live a Protestant and die a Catholic.

In a diocese with which I happen to be well acquainted, the conversions to the Catholic faith are, at an average, about two hundred in each year ; and I suppose throughout the kingdom they may amount to about five thousand annually. Some

of these are secret, many of them occur during the last illness of the persons so changing ; but, however they happen, they are numerous, considering how small the sum total of Protestantism is ; and when joined to the numbers who emigrate, when neither loaves nor fishes can be had at home, account for the gradual diminution of the Established Church. This decrease is chiefly perceptible in the country parts, where pride and profit, social connexions, and mutual example, have less influence than in towns and cities : so that I know not, but for the preservation of the Establishment, it might be wise to adopt the opinion of a gallant General, lately reported to have recommended in parliament, that our towns be all fortified like Derry, and the Protestants enclosed within the walls. If such a proposition, however, should ever be carried in parliament, I hope a rider may be tacked to the bill, exempting all bishops and chapters from providing the population with churches, or keeping them in repair ; as nothing could be more unjust than to oppress a prelate already encumbered with thirty or forty thousand acres of

land, by imposing on him the additional burthen of propping up the house of God.

The ministers of this Establishment are as various in character, as their callings are different. We must take it as a certain truth, that they are all moved by interior grace to take upon them the cure of souls, as they themselves declare in the presence of God and of the Church ; but then, as there are many mansions in the house of their heavenly Father, so they fit themselves for them by a great variety of occupations whilst on earth : some are given to agriculture, others are devoted to angling ; many of them, like Abel, are fond of tending flocks; and not a few of them are famous hunters before the Lord. Being appointed officers in the Church militant, they are frequently found at the head of armed detachments ; and from a love of justice, and a hatred of hearing the name of the Lord profaned, it is almost impossible to find a bench of magistrates not studded with them : indeed, it is at petty sessions they often discharge the more weighty duties of their ministry, in is-

Parson

suing decrees for the recovery of tithes. They are also diligent in promoting comfort amongst the poor, or establishing peace and good will in their several parishes, by taking from the peasant his last shilling, that he might not spend it in the ale-house ; or by deciding between two scolds, on the sworn testimony of their peers, that the goat of the one had not browsed upon the other's hedge. Much of their leisure time is also usefully employed in collecting for their favourite newspapers details of atrocities lately committed ; in transcribing notices just posted up on the chapel-doors by Captain Rock ; in making up reports of the conversions of benighted Catholics for the Home Missionary Society ; in depicting, with all the warmth of Irish feeling, the rapid progress of the Bible Society, and the vast numbers of Irish Testaments which were administered by them to the poor papists, (not a word of tithe in the report,) who were now indeed *beginning* to be enlightened. The saints amongst them, in addition to the above employments, have to attend to the sick and the dying, the naked child, and the hungry parent, to

know whether they would exchange their faith for money, for clothes, or for employment ; they have to descend on the superstition or idolatry of their religion, the tyranny and craft of their priests. When disengaged from these duties, there still remains a most important one to be discharged towards the little gentry with whom they associate ; they have to instil into them a horror of popery and of all her abominations ; to make these dupes transgress the laws of their own Church, by compelling their wretched workmen to labour upon holidays ; hoping that, by making them faithless to God, and to the authority which they revere, that they will render them attached to their employers, diligent in their work and service, and totally averse to making reprisals by theft or idleness for the injury and violence done to their religion and conscience.

Yet I must add, that the greater number of the clergymen thus piously engaged, are so not through malice, but influenced by a mad enthusiasm, or an habitual bigotry and intolerance,

which, often sucked in with their mothers' milk, have grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength.

They have cherished these prejudices, they have loved them, as constituting a portion of the inheritance possessed by the Ascendancy, and have avoided rather than sought for opportunities of removing them. The irritation produced in their body by the attacks made in and out of parliament on the monopolists, and their injustice and corruption in Ireland, has been continued and increased by the most vicious public press that ever cursed a country. This press is supported by the Church, and repays it by destroying its peace, and furnishing food to its worst appetite; and hence, men who are generally of a respectable class, well educated, and capable of being an ornament and an advantage to society, are, by their connexion with a vicious system, and by being cursed with an enormous Establishment, rendered the greatest bane of Ireland, and the most influential opposers, if not disturbers, of her peace.

It would, however, be unjust not to add, that these men, like all other corporators, have in general two characters.—As private individuals, as heads of families, they are, when not too much infected with Methodism, amiable and humane ; and there are not a few of them totally superior to the prejudices and follies of their order, and who are really a blessing to the neighbourhood in which they reside ; men estimable not only for their public and domestic virtues, but chiefly because they have fortitude to rise in these times above the prejudices of their profession, and to resist the force of both interest and example.

On the whole, it appears to me that Religion at present, in the Established Church, is rather excited by the spirit of party, than the spirit of the Gospel ; that she has been awakened rather by the sounds of discord than by the voice of peace ; and that, when the present effervescence shall have subsided, she will be found weakened rather than purified by the ordeal through which she will have passed. Like the declining patient whom the evening fever animates and enlivens,

but whom the morning finds relaxed and helpless,
so the Establishment is flushed in her decline,
whilst her strength decays, and all her force is
(wasting.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

&c. &c.

J. K. L.

LETTER IV.

ON THE CHARACTER OF THE LAWS, THE ADMINISTRATION
OF JUSTICE; ON CORPORATIONS, &c. &c.

Οὐ μόνον τὸ καλὸν ἀγαθὸν.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN Cicero inscribed to Brutus one of his paradoxes, intended to prove that nothing was truly good but what was just and honourable, he thought it useful to found his reasoning on the above maxim of the Stoics; he was well aware that ancient names and authorities are prepossessing, and that truths which have passed the ordeal of time are not easily contested.

When writing on the administration of justice, and whatever is connected with it in Ireland, we require the aid both of authority and antiquity to keep our mind steady, and to assist us in forming a just estimate of the distance by which, in this respect, we are removed from the maxim of the Stoicks and the doctrine of Cicero.

When I consider that justice, whether in a nation or in an individual, is a fixed disposition of the will to give to every man his due, even to the last farthing ; to distribute impartially the honours and emoluments, as well as the burthens, of the State ; to apportion punishment to crime, and rewards to virtuous actions, without distinction or exception of persons :—when I consider this great principle emanating from **HIM** who is the fountain of all justice, existing before the Gospel, with the Gospel, and to last to eternity ; when I view it thus, and compare it with what is called by its name in Ireland, a thrill of horror pervades my blood, because we are all hastening to **HIM** who will judge us in justice, and weigh all our actions in the scale of the sanctuary.

But it is my duty to suppress such feelings whilst I write to you on this interesting subject.

When the laws of a country are unjust, I take it to be impossible that they could be justly administered. Seneca says, "*homines quanti, quanti sunt educationi debent.*" The influence of education is proved by the adherence of men to the religion of their fathers, by the manners and customs of nations, which continue for centuries upon centuries unchanged, as we may infer from what we ourselves have seen or read of in modern times, compared with what is recorded by Cæsar, or by Herodotus and the writers of the Old Testament; but if education have such influence upon the opinions and habits of men in what regards their relation with the Deity and national customs, though these things are often above the reach, or beneath the notice of the law, how much greater influence, or rather power, must it not exercise upon these moral and social habits of mind and conduct which it is the immediate objects of the laws to mould and regulate.

That they are the laws which educate men, not indeed to read or write, but to think and act, is what results from their very nature ; for a law is a rule of conduct, not only prescribing what is to be done, but enforcing the doing of it by penalties ; it, therefore, necessarily produces a habit of acting in a certain way ; and who does not know that a habit of acting produces a corresponding habit of thought. If any one doubt this truth, he will find it engraved in the history of Ireland in characters more deep and legible than those in which Job would have written on the flint the volume of his sufferings.

Some of our political laws appear to me unjust ; they are directly and expressly partial in their operation. Let them in this view be severally compared with the definition I have given above of justice, and if they be found in their application to agree with it, they have been entirely misunderstood by me.

Many of our laws are in the abstract perfectly wise and equitable ; but others of them, generally

called penal laws; so dislocate our society, that amongst us even the good laws in their operation work injustice: for instance the Habeas Corpus Act, the Trial by Jury Law, the law creating bodies corporate, or authorizing the election of members to serve in parliament. These laws, so salutary in themselves, are more burthensome to Ireland perhaps than would be the most pure and unqualified despotism. Why? The Habeas Corpus Act produces our law terms and circuits, our general gaol deliveries; and through these it lets loose occasionally on the defenceless Catholic the whole spirit, and letter, and machinery, of the Ascendancy, and their penal code. To this hour the proscribed race, looking always to heaven in their distress, imagine that the approach of the judge to the county-town is accompanied by bad weather, rain, storms, and all the anger of the elements. The trial by jury sends these Catholics from one judge who might be just or merciful, to a dozen from whom they expected, till lately, neither justice nor mercy; and even now, the records of the time, and still better, local knowledge and personal observation, show that the lives, liberty, or property of Irishmen,

when appealing to the laws, are deeply affected by the religion they may happen to profess.

X Corporations should protect and promote commerce; they should be the very citadels of a nation's liberty. They are in Ireland like nightmares upon commerce, and the very fastnesses of corruption. Cicero would seem to have written of them, *neque enim expletur unquam, nec satiatur in eis cupiditatis sitis; neque solum ea quæ habent libidine augendi cruciantur sed etiam amittendi metu.* They are from the which is the largest of them, to the pettiest borough on the Western coast, a palsied and a paralyzing nuisance; cruel, heartless, and dissipated, like an old gamester and sensualist, who would extort or borrow, beg or steal, that he might gratify the wasted remnant of his passions.

And the law of election, what does it bring to the Catholic? If he perchance be opulent, it brings to him a deeper sense of his fallen honour, of his degradation, of his shame; if he be very poor, it brings him to the hustings to proclaim to the world

a public lie, to wit, that he is a freeholder ; having first steeped his soul in perjury, lest he, and his wife, and his child, and his father, should be driven from their hut, without food, shelter, or hope. To him the election law, in its operation, is like the wind from the desert, bringing with it a sort of moral pestilence, against which no human remedy can prevail.

But if such be the effects of good laws in Ireland, what think you is the state of feeling and thinking produced by those which are confessedly bad ? It is said that circumstances qualify even the laws of nature ; we do not condemn the Jews who carried away with them the property which they had borrowed from the Egyptians. Socrates would not condemn the man, who, rather than die of hunger, takes in secret or by force what he cannot purchase, beg, or borrow ; because the law of self-preservation is a primary duty of man, and anterior to that which created property and rendered it inviolable. But if circumstances thus affect the most sacred institutions, may they not operate with powerful effect upon human laws ? May not

these laws appear wholesome and wise, and yet be destructive of the public welfare? If they be passed for a community which does not exist, are they not, as a rule of conduct, perfectly idle? and if they be applied to the government of a people who were not contemplated at their enactment, is it possible they could be suited to the wants of such a people, or tend in any way to their advantage?

Can the laws of one country be transferred to another without regard to the temper, habits, trade, resources, modes of industry, or religion, of its inhabitants? If so, Montesquieu and right reason have been both blind. The laws of Ireland are a confused mass—a moral chaos; they have not educated the people on principles agreeable to reason or the law of God; hence, human nature has either been perverted by them, or revolted against them; strife and contention have sprung from them; anarchy, fraud, and oppression, have been the fruits of them; all the evils of Ireland could have been healed—and they have been aggravated by them; the wisest judges who ever

graced a bench could not dispense them to advantage: but, with the exception of a few, the judges themselves have had their minds and hearts influenced by them, and the people, whom they afflicted, always feared and hated them. Efforts have been made, and are making, to administer these laws justly; but it is impossible until they are equalized, and fitted to the people; until the spirit of conquest, and monopoly, and persecution, is extracted from them; until they are made to accord with that immutable justice which I have above defined, they cannot be made to produce order, prosperity, or peace. To labour at the administration of law in this country, whilst the laws themselves, and the abuses grafted on them, are suffered to remain unchanged, is like rolling a stone against a hill, which before it has reached the summit, rolls back again.

Lord Redesdale has said, and it has been repeated with surprise and indignation, that in Ireland there is one law for the rich and another for the poor: our proverb, "there is no law for a Catholic," expresses the truth more concisely.

and more justly ; for a poor Protestant does obtain justice in Ireland, and is protected not only by the law, but by the passions. They are, however, shallow men, or men who have never applied their minds to our legal history, who express surprise at this state of things. For when the Protestants are treated not as ordinary subjects ; when every class of them possess certain privileges or rights which arise from the depression of the Catholic—privileges and rights which are actually composed of what is withheld from us—how can there be an equality, when a Catholic and a Protestant come before the law? It might as well be said, that there was one and the same law for the feudal baron and his serf, or for a French bourgeois and one of the noblesse under the old *regime*, as for a Catholic and Protestant in Ireland. When two Catholics contend, the law is dispensed equally to them, not in mercy, but in justice ; unless one of them has been more fortunate in making interest (a phrase well understood in Ireland) than the other. When two Protestants appeal to the law, there is as much equity in the decision as our judges and juries are capable of dispensing : but

if a Catholic and a Protestant appear in court, let the case be criminal or civil, all the passions and prejudices are excited, and the glorious uncertainty of the law itself is lost in the greater uncertainty of what may be the verdict of the jury. I leave out those cases where a criminal is arraigned for some offence against the peace of our Lord the King ;—that is, against the power or the crimes of the Ascendancy or its agents, against the Peace-preservation Bill, or the Insurrection Act, or the Whiteboy Act, or any of the acts framed for the establishment or security of the rights of the Church. When a man is arraigned upon any one of these, for not having the fear of God before his eyes, (as Serjeant Lefroy would term it,) the law itself awakes the passions, and men are found to rush to its execution upon the criminal (for if arraigned he is supposed guilty) with all the avidity of hungry mastiffs. I have sometimes sat for hours in courts of justice, both in Dublin and in the country ; I have heard witnesses examined, lawyers declaiming, judges charging, juries bringing in verdicts ; and I have observed,

in many cases, the influence of the penal code working throughout every thing I heard or saw. But what seemed to me most lamentable was, the unconsciousness of this influence which sometimes seemed to prevail, whilst at others it escaped, as it were accidentally, or was unblushingly avowed and acted upon.

The witnesses as often labour to conceal, as to manifest the truth ; one class of them anxious to defeat the law, the other only intent on procuring conviction ; both regardless of the obligation of an oath, and perfectly indifferent about contributing to the ends of justice. The national acuteness of the lawyer is whetted by what he has to combat in the witness ; hence, he is often interesting—sometimes ludicrous : in speaking to evidence, you can instantly perceive to what party he belongs. The judge is often decorous ; on some occasions you imagine he is the advocate of the crown or of the criminal ; there are times and cases when you know not how to designate him, and you only lament that wicked system which placed him on the bench.

The juries, in criminal cases, generally are such as can be most easily found. But when a special interest is excited by the trial, the art, and talent, and trick, employed at one time by the sheriff's deputy, at another by the clerk of the crown, to array their men and produce a jury, is such as would furnish food for several months' reflection to those two sages who spent their lives weeping or laughing over the follies or wickedness of their fellow-men. In short, the administration of justice in Ireland is thwarted by the spirit of the law ; it is analogous to the unsettled state of the country, and influenced constantly by the character of those who are employed about it.

There is an old and an unnatural conflict between the people and the laws. Until lately there was no justice in Ireland, unless by accident, or when the good sense of men interposed at intervals of tranquillity, and superseded the law itself. At present the virtue and talent of some judges ; the reports of law proceedings, which are constantly circulating ; the character of the Chief Go-

vernor; the spirit of the people, not easily brooking oppression; the custom of holding sessions in open court; and the innate justice of the well educated and most opulent of the gentry, are combating, with some success, against the bad laws, and the spirit engendered by them.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir, &c. &c.

J. K. L.

LETTER V.

ON THE INCREASE OF POPULATION IN IRELAND; ITS CAUSES AND EFFECTS.

DEAR SIR,

IT seems to be allowed on all hands, that there has been a prodigious increase of people in Ireland during the last thirty or forty years. I also think there has been an increase, but not to the extent which is generally supposed. There has been no accurate census of our population at any period; the last is more near to the truth than any which preceded it, yet it is imperfect. I have no doubt that there are considerably more than seven millions of inhabitants in Ireland.

The Catholics have ever been unwilling to make known their numbers to any agent of the Government. Having too often experienced from it what they deemed treachery or injustice, they naturally distrusted whomsoever approached them in its name. Ignorant of its views in computing the number of its slaves, these latter rather feared they were to be decimated or banished, as in the time of Cromwell, to some bog or desert if found too numerous, than that any measures were to be adopted for the improvement of their condition.

When the militia were first embodied in Ireland, I recollect the terror and alarm which were then excited by the enrolment of the male population ; every mother sought to conceal her son with the same anxiety that Rachel in the time of Herod laboured to hide her infant and stop its cries when the executioner of the impious decree approached her dwelling.

The returns by the collectors of hearth-money were incorrect from a variety of causes, but chiefly because there were numberless human dwellings

in the country which could not be discovered by a stranger ; or if discovered, would not be considered by him as the abodes of men : and also because these tax gatherers were accustomed to imitate their masters in disregarding oaths and honesty, and suppressed in their returns probably one-half of the houses in which they had collected assessments. In some particular counties a more correct census might have been made, such as that of the County Kilkenny by the late Mr. Tighe : but admitting that Mr. Tighe possessed, as he did, the confidence of his tenantry and neighbours in an eminent degree, yet I think it was not possible for him either by personal inquiry or the agency of those whom he employed, to ascertain the exact number of inhabitants even in that county ; and this, my opinion, has been confirmed by the perusal of his book, and by comparing its statements with my own personal observations.

When the late census was taken, a better feeling pervaded the country than there does at present, or did perhaps for many years before ; the Catholic Clergy also lent their aid in no slight

degree; and hence it is more accurate than any which preceded it: but yet I know that in several places where it is supposed to have been taken with great exactness, the returns did not include the entire population. I have heard of some parts of the country from which these returns were still more incorrect, and in all cases within my knowledge, they were under, not over, the actual number of the people.

It is not, however, the millions, few or many, who now vegetate on this beautiful island, which it is my object to consider, but whether these numbers, whatever may be their amount, have increased as rapidly as is supposed; whether they be still increasing, and the causes and effects of such increase.

That there has been a considerable increase, is admitted by all; that the population, as some persons suppose, has been doubled within the last thirty or forty years, is to me more than doubtful; I am of opinion, that, in some mountainous districts, where tracts of land have been reclaimed, or sub-

divisions of farms freely permitted or encouraged, as also in a few trading towns, or where public buildings, or new roads, or other accidental causes, may have created or greatly enlarged a village, such may have been the result ; but throughout the country in general, I think it has not. The number of cabins, or farm-houses, of places of worship, which have been built ; above all, the sensible increase of the congregation at the Catholic chapels, are, it is true, a striking proof of the increase which has taken place ; but a two-fold increase in a few years is more than striking,—it is unprecedented in this country, and without admitting it, we might in some degree account for the appearances which I have noticed.

From the year 1796 the advancement of agriculture in Ireland has been great. Whilst the old leases, though taken before that period at a rack-rent, remained unexpired, the tenants had an interest in the land ; they had some profits which they generally expended in building houses or offices ; those who dwelt in caverns and the caves of the earth came forth many of them from

their lurking-places, and raised huts which were at least visible. They procured clothing, and appeared abroad to swell the congregations from which before they were often absent through necessity. Chapels were also erected, and tracts of land which before looked like a desert, put on the appearance of an inhabited country. The existing population ventured out, and increasing as it did rapidly, appeared to be doubled, when, perhaps, not more than one-fourth of its original number was added to it. The only means of ascertaining accurately the ratio of this increase would be, the examination of the parochial registers of births, and marriages, and deaths, wheresoever they happened to be kept with regularity. Those which belonged to the Catholic Clergy in the diocese where I live, and which had been commenced as soon as the penal code was relaxed, were, as has been given in evidence by the late Catholic Bishop, destroyed in the year 1798, lest they should fall into the hands of the orangemen. This precaution was deemed necessary, as these loyalists had in one instance at least in this country, seized upon a parochial re-

gister amongst other plunder, and having discovered in it a list of rebels, as they charitably supposed, sought them out as victims for their fury.

From that time, until the last few years, not many regular registers have been kept, at least in the diocese to which I have alluded; but by those of the last four years, which I have inspected, it appears to me, that during this period the population is stationary, subject only to such fluctuations as do not afford grounds to suppose that the diminution or increase of it is at all deserving of notice, or capable of being computed. When the number of births are nearly equal for four successive years in a given district, and also the number of marriages, the population must either be stationary, or its decline or progress is regular and uniform. But if the number of births, and also of marriages, in each of these years be found on an average to be almost exactly equal to those which occurred in any average year of the last forty, then we should reasonably conclude, that the population has not undergone any considerable change. That such is the case throughout

a great portion of Leinster, not including the capital, and excepting mountainous districts, I am disposed to think. The table at the conclusion of this Letter will further elucidate this opinion.

Before I notice the causes which appear to me to have accelerated the increase of the Irish people, it may not be irrelevant to observe, that, without adopting the opinions of Mr. Owen on the capability of this country to support eighteen or twenty millions of inhabitants, I am inclined to the opinion that its present population is not at all excessive; and that the legislature might in a single session pass such laws as would, in the course of very few years, render the poor of Ireland, who now create so much anxiety and alarm, if not as comfortable as those of the same class in England, at least place them beyond the reach of want, and in a way of promoting their own comforts. There is a large surface of land in Ireland, which, if once reclaimed, would not, like the commons of England or marshes of Scotland, be ungrateful to the husbandman: on the contrary, it would be exceedingly fertile. They are not these lands, however,

on which I would depend for the support of the population, but on the lands actually employed in pasture or tillage.

Owing to the want of capital and of improved plans of husbandry, these latter do not yield at an average one-half the quantity of grass, vegetables, roots, or corn, which, under a better system of municipal law, they might be made to produce. The rack rents, grand jury assessments, taxes, tithes, and church-rates, have so ground down the peasantry, that they have wasted the very earth itself in their endeavours to extract from it something wherewith to satisfy the locusts which come successively to torment them. They have no capital ; they cannot drain, nor fence, nor manure their fields ; they cannot improve their seed ; their cattle are not able to work ; it is not in their power to employ or feed labourers ; they have no winter crops ; their fallows are not stirred or cleansed ; the most simple or useful improvement in husbandry is not within their reach ; and should any of them be more fortunate, and succeed in scraping together some capital, he hides it in the

earth, as his fathers did in the time of the Danish incursions, lest if he appeared to be worth a guinea, his lease might not be renewed; or, if renewed, lest his rent should be raised in proportion to his industry and his own improvements. The rack rents are an intolerable evil, and will be so whilst the laws continue to render the landlord a tyrant; and the tenant a slave; whilst fear and distrust, hatred and oppression, are the links which connect the peasantry and gentry of Ireland, the land must wither and the people starve, whether they be few or many. But the most heart-rending curse which Providence has permitted to fall on the land occupier in Ireland, is the Church Establishment; this, like the scorpion's tail, is armed at all points, and scourges the peasant through tithes and church-rates, till it draws his very blood. This Establishment not only strips him of food and raiment, but it also insults him by the monstrous injustice of obliging him to give his sweat and labour, and the bread of his children, to build or repair waste houses, whilst he himself is left to pray in the open air; to feed the parson and his rapacious family and followers, who go about, not

doing good, but to vilify and calumniate the religion which this peasant reveres : it compels him to purchase bread, and wine, and stoves, and music, for the Church which he deems profane ; to pay the glazier, and the mason, and the sexton, and the grave-digger, who divide his clothes between them, and cast lots, like the Deicide Jews, upon his cloak. Whilst these oppressions are suffered to continue, how can the men, who are made to the image and likeness of God, and for whose use the earth yields all its produce, how can they be fed, or in any way provided for ? They must either be sacrificed in hecatombs to the furious passions which brood over this country, or these passions must be restrained, and the laws altered which gave them birth. I should rather, with Hobbes, suppose that society is not congenial to man ; or desire, with Rousseau, to return to a state of nature, than cease protesting against the system in Ireland which has rendered population a curse, which has dried up every source of industry and profit, not only in the inhabitants of the country, but in the earth itself, and which has condemned, by an inversion of the ordinance of God, a people

to live only for the sake of institutions. But then, how can these evils be remedied, and this abundant population provided for? Let the laws be equalized, public nuisances abolished, and a provision made for the poor, which will give them food and raiment for their labour. This will remove an immense mass of discontent; it will produce peace and order, not by terror and compulsion, as at present, but by self-interest and attachment to the law; it will introduce capital, trade, and manufactures, as the accompaniments of peace; it will destroy the system of rack rents, of sub-divisions of land, whilst it will, in a few years, increase the income of the proprietor, as well as the capital, skill, and improvements of the farmer. But I am here anticipating much of what I intend to discuss in a future Letter on the introduction of poor-rates to Ireland.

To resume, therefore, the subject of population. I consider it now stationary in this country, or nearly so: an inquiry, therefore, into the cause of its rapid increase does not seem to me very necessary; it is, however, deserving of notice.

I attribute whatever of increase has taken place ^{population} in the numbers of the people chiefly to the unprecedented demand for agricultural produce which prevailed during the late protracted wars ; to the immense capital in paper-money and credit which was then afloat, and to the incitements, as well as facilities, thus afforded for the employment of labourers and tradesmen. When men are employed and have money, when a father can with facility give an establishment, however slender, to his child, young people, though busy, find time to intermarry ; and when thus rendered happy, they seldom—at least in Ireland—fail to increase and multiply. We should not omit to notice what the political economists have so sagaciously discovered ; that as the ordinary food of our peasantry is potatoes, a commodity generally cheap and abundant, a small provision seems to the poor man sufficient to entitle him to become the founder of a family. That this species of food were rendered more scarce, and the cultivation of it, as a means of human subsistence, discouraged, appears to me desirable,—and not only desirable, but very practicable. But this by way of parenthesis. Another

cause of the regular increase of population is found in the poverty and the piety—strange to tell!—of the Irish.

From what has lately appeared in evidence before a committee of the House of Commons, I am inclined to think, that if in England the poverty and the habits of life occasioned by it were the same as in Ireland, the illicit intercourse of the sexes would be as extensive and unblushing as it is at Madras or Calcutta: but amongst us this appetite is restrained, as well by a natural decorum, which has ever characterized the women of this country, as by a strong and reverential fear of God, constantly kept alive and strengthened by the admonitions of the priests; but as love, like death, *æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regumque turres*, when it once enters into our hamlets, it seeks its object not by degrading the person and tainting the soul, but in that holy wedlock which our Redeemer has sanctified, and his Apostle declared to be honourable in all without distinction of rich or poor. The Clergy often dissuade it; they calculate for the young lover; they represent

to him the difficulties and distress which probably await himself and the object of his affections ; they recommend to him the necessity of restraining the ardour of his attachment ; they even plead their own example : but how often have I myself yielded to the sighs of the virgin or the tears of the youth, and blessed the nuptials which I could no longer prevent. Good God, how little are we, the Catholic Clergy of Ireland, known even to our friends, when one of them could represent us in parliament as encouraging the intermarriage of the poor for the sake of "base lucre!"—those poor who have nothing to bestow but their prayers and affection, and with whom we gladly divide every shilling which Providence places at our disposal. The writer of this Letter is connected with upwards of 200,000 Catholics, rich and poor, and he receives from them all little more than *one-third* of what a neighbouring parson receives for the tithes of a **SINGLE PARISH** ; and this pittance he shares freely and affectionately with his children, who are the poor. In doing so, he only copies the conduct of his brethren ; and he states it not through self-esteem, but in justification of the order of men

to whom he has the honour and happiness to belong.

The piety of our peasantry thus impels them to increase and multiply, not so as to violate the law of nature and afflict society, but in the manner ordained of God, and sanctioned by Christ and his Apostles. The poverty of the people contributes to this result also; for the poor are less solicitous about an establishment in the world than those who already have a competency. They say of marriage, as of other changes in their life, that "it cannot make them worse," but that it may give them a help-mate in distress, or at least a companion in suffering; and the most sweet, if not the most sentimental, of poets has told us, *solatium est miseris socios habere doloris*. This may appear a weak plea, but we admit it, and excuse the weakness by which it is dictated. A political economist may sneer at these sentiments, and hunt the pages of a Protestant Divine for well-worded sarcasm against the writer. But without entering, for the present at least, into the fashionable doctrines on population, it may be permitted

to a Catholic Priest to assert, that he is bound by his religion to preserve, as far as he may, the people committed to his care from *sin*. Some *philosophes*, I am aware, treat such subjects with levity, and look without loathing on the shocking pictures which certain parishes in Protestant England exhibit. But these practices are regarded under a very serious aspect by the Sacred Scriptures and the Catholic Church; and by their laws the priest is bound to regulate his duties, as he believes in their authority and in the unerring justice of that tribunal to the foot of which he is hastening.

The parent also of the poor and unprotected female, who loves her as he does his life, when he finds himself unable to provide for her, and his end perhaps approaching, rather than leave her exposed to the dangers of the world, gladly gives her hand to a poor and virtuous companion, that her honour may not be stained, that she may not, by her misfortune, bring his own grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

The intimate familiarity which prevails amongst the poor, the absence of that formal reserve and polite decorum which is observable amongst even the middling ranks of society, is another cause why intimacies are easily contracted in the lower classes of the people ; and these intimacies must end in marriage or in sin. Let then the condition of the poor be altered ; enable them to acquire a competency ; give the parent some means of providing for his daughter ; give to her a better education and a deeper sense, not of propriety alone, but of politeness and social decency, and you will delay marriage, and thereby retard the increase of population without infringing on virtue. Poverty and population act reciprocally upon each other like cause and effect ; remove the one, or lessen it, and you will thereby check the other.

As to the general influence of the increased number of the people on the state of the country, this deserves to be considered in two points of view. If the axe be laid to the root of the evil in Ireland, and a provident system of legislation adopted for her, the present population is not ex-

cessive, nor likely to become so ; I think it no more than adequate to her wants. A new system of government in Ireland would shortly create a very great demand for labour, and afford an opportunity to landlords either to provide permanently for the poor on their estates, without permitting them to multiply their dwellings, or enable them to remove to other parts of the country where labour might be more valuable, not as it happens now, when they may be driven to perish on the highways by a death more piteous than that of the Hindoos whom Hasting's cruelty sent to perish in the Ganges.

But if the policy of governing by division be pursued longer, then the people will perish by famine, or emigrate to Britain, or be cut off by the sword. If strong measures be resorted to, and some of the Irish gentry and absentees proceed as they have been doing, these results, or some one of them, will be accelerated. Captain Rock will resume his sway, the poor will instinctively confederate, the Insurrection Act will be in constant operation, and if a foreign war should oceur, and

circumstances favour it, there may be a general rebellion, the most sanguinary which has ever occurred in Ireland. What the result would be, God only knows. I know that my office as a minister of religion, and my duty as a loyal subject, require that I should state my opinions at a time when effectual remedies may be safely applied ; and I do so, totally regardless of the slave and the bigot; nay, though I were doomed, like the prophetess in the poet, never to be believed. Or let it be supposed that the law, by the agency of the musket, the transport, or the gibbet, may still sustain the uneasy tranquillity of the country, and that the population should be pressed on as heretofore ; then they will congregate in towns and villages, finding no habitation or employment in the country ; and should a dearth of provisions occur, famine and pestilence will set in together, and rid us probably of a million. Happily we have missionaries in abundance to attend the dying ; but if there be "a chosen curse, some hidden thunder in the stores of heaven," it must be reserved to blast those

men who shall have brought such ruin on their country.

Or again, let it be supposed that no such catastrophe will occur: then the natural mode of relief is emigration to our kind and affectionate children the Scots, or to England. Some of our leaders in the Association may publish a proclamation, or one of our bishops a pastoral, explaining the advantages of emigration to England, pointing out the route, and furnishing from the Catholic rent-fund the expenses of a passage by steam-boats. This will afford to England an opportunity of exercising her hospitality, which, like the faith of the Romans, is spoken of throughout the world. Or should she be so ungenerous as to dismiss the strangers empty, in that case the emigrants may sink into the sea upon their passage homewards, or wander up and down like ghosts upon the shore, as their fathers did in the days of Elizabeth, living upon grass and sea-weed until they expire, and leave their bones to bleach upon the cliffs. These are the effects which I contem-

plate as likely to arise from the state of the population combined with the state of the laws, should no amelioration take place.

I have the honour to remain,

&c. &c.

J. K. L.

AVERAGE number of births and marriages in the united parishes of ————— consisting of an extensive district of champaign country, as well as a small but very thriving town.

Average number of Births in each year, from 1784 to

1787, both included,	-	-	-	-	296
from 1803 to					
1806, ditto,	-	-	-	-	281
from 1810 to					
1813, ditto,	-	-	-	-	303
from 1820 to					
1823, ditto,	-	-	-	-	305

AVERAGE NUMBER OF MARRIAGES IN EACH OF THE
ABOVE YEARS.

From 1784 to 1787, in each year,	-	-	-	-	48
— 1803 to 1806, ditto,	-	-	-	-	48
— 1810 to 1813, ditto,	-	-	-	-	56
— 1820 to 1823, ditto,	-	-	-	-	55
Number of deaths in 1823,	-	-	-	-	136

It is to be observed, that, according to the above returns, the number of marriages in the last

year was exactly the same as in the year 1784, that is forty years ago ; and that the number of births was almost equal in one year, at that remote period, to what it has been in the year just ended ; the difference being only *nine* in a total of about three hundred.

LETTER VI.

ON EDUCATION IN IRELAND ; AND ON BIBLE SOCIETIES.

DEAR SIR,

THERE were not as many verse-makers in Rome in the time of Horace, as there are writers and speakers on education now-a-days in a single assembly of ladies and gentlemen in Ireland. It is difficult to obtain silence in a crowd ; it is still more difficult to secure attention for any length of time ; and I fear that you are almost the only reader of this letter who will not merely look through it, and then give it to the winds, *rapidis ut fiat ludibria ventis*. I will write it, however, and commit it, like a lottery

ticket, to fortune or providence ; it may be forgotten amongst the thousand blanks, it is possible that a prize awaits it.

When I look back to the splendid labours of the lamented Whitbread on behalf of education ; when I consider the spirit which was awakened by him, and so successfully disseminated by those who, like Mr. Brougham, were his companions or his followers in that godly work, and compare these men and their views with the stunted thoughts and puerile follies of many who now hark in the general cry, my admiration of the great and wise men who have sought, or still seek, to advance human knowledge is enhanced, whilst my contempt of their helpless retainers is without bounds.

A sort of enthusiasm in favour of the education of the lower orders has now prevailed in these countries for a few years ; more than a just value has been attached to it, and there are but few men in society who calculate upon its possible consequences. Like every other subject or bub-

ble, whether it be war, commerce, religion, or taste, when it connects itself with the feelings of a people, it hurries them forward precipitately, and they neither will, nor perhaps can, weigh dispassionately any arguments unless such as are calculated to promote the favoured or fashionable system. I have more than once, for my own amusement, reasoned against the diffusion of knowledge amongst the poor, and I was highly gratified to observe the surprise as well as the absurd remarks which my observations occasioned. I took care, however, like Socrates when disputing about the nature of the Godhead, that I did not reason in the presence of "a MEETING of the Friends of Education," lest I would be stoned : for if the Delphian god himself announced that evils might arise from an imperfect education, such as at best can be given to the poor, his oracle would be slighted, or perhaps he would himself be thenceforth excluded from the assemblies of the gods. It happens, however, that I am truly and heartily devoted to the greatest possible diffusion of knowledge, *even in Ireland*, and not less zealously opposed to the folly or malice of those who would

put this mighty moral engine to work, without guards and checks to control and regulate it; or who would avail themselves of the public feeling in favour of education, for the purpose of engrafting upon it their own wild theories in religion.

The state of education in this country is not certainly gratifying to a man of reflection. The study of science is confined to a few, and the only sciences which are well cultivated amongst us are those connected with the physical world. Positive sciences, which require great labour, patience, and industry, are not suited to the Irish character; and hence, as well as from the small profits or honours annexed to them, they are greatly neglected. Another cause of this neglect is found in the excessive wealth of our University, and of the Established Church, where pride and indolence, the natural growth of riches, occupy the place of labour and study; whilst, on the other hand, a want of time and of means prevent the Catholic Clergy from devoting themselves to literary pursuits.

Politics, political economy, religious innovation, these are the subjects, not sciences, in which Irish genius delights : these studies, if such they can be called, employ the inventive powers of the mind, they recreate the fancy, they supply food to eloquence and to the passions, and supersede, in a good measure, all attention to matter of fact.

Most of our youth above the general condition of the people are acquainted with the preliminaries of knowledge ; they acquire just as much of classics and of science as is sufficient to deceive them into the notion that they are educated, and to precipitate them unprepared into the labyrinth of public life. To find in Ireland a good logician, a learned historian, or a deeply read divine, is almost as difficult as to discover a venomous serpent or a monster such as Horace describes. You could meet with apostles and prophets on any of the highways, but amongst them a man of deep research is indeed a *rara avis*. A mathematician or geologist, a man skilled in plants or minerals, is not a very rare commodity in Ireland ; but compared with politicians, and es-

sayists, and preachers of the Word, he bears as little proportion as the handful of Greeks did to the myriads of Xerxes. That a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, was in no country perhaps more fully proved than in ours. For here a little superficial learning acting upon the passions by means of the press and public meetings, is one of the great causes of the incessant agitation in which the public mind is kept. This action is called discussion, but I assure you, that though I look at the papers and pamphlets with which the country is inundated, I do not always find in them a sound exposition of truth, or an essay which bespeaks in the writer experience of the world, knowledge of past events, or an intellect taught to reason justly.

But to pass from the education of those supposed to be educated, to those who are not ; it would be presumptuous in me to state all I think, or even all I know upon this subject, as His Majesty's commissioners are about to report officially upon it, and have obtained all the information which is necessary to enable them to do so fully. It may be sufficient to inform you, that the wants

of our poor as to a well-regulated system of education, are like their wants of food and clothing: wants which press upon their strongest appetite; wants which they labour to supply by every means in their power, but which, notwithstanding all their exertions, are left unsatisfied. As when, however, the potatoes fail them, they have recourse to weeds and herbs, or, as they substitute fern for a bed, and hay for covering, so when a good school is not within their reach they have recourse to the hedge.

 Far be it from me to complain that the poor of Ireland have been thus abandoned; that when the sword ceased to destroy them, and the malice of the Legion Club itself had been exhausted in robbing them, that then their enemies should have laboured to blind their intellect by forbidding education, and sought to efface the image of God from their souls by giving them over to that reprobate sense which a want of religious and moral instruction generates.—I do not complain of these things more than of the perverse and insulting reproaches of ignorance and immorality, with which

they are now assailed by the very men, or their immediate descendants, who immured them in this mental bondage. No : I do not complain of these injuries and insults, for which there is no redress on earth. I refer them to HIM who says, "revenge is mine, and I will repay." What I complain of is, that of all the endowments for the education of the poor in Ireland, whether by the State or by individuals, there is as yet no one for the people at large.

I complain that in this respect the sense of injustice and wrong is so obliterated from the minds of some public functionaries, that, without fear, shame, or remorse, they violate the laws, disregard their own oaths, and trample upon the last testaments of the dead.

I complain that foundations for education are turned into sinecures ; that diocesan and parochial schools are either not held, or if held, are free only to those who pay for their education ; that charter schools are converted into seminaries of proselytism, and their funds embezzled ; that Ca-

tholics are excluded from every endowed school, or exposed in them to have their minds trained by a master of a religion different from their own, or of no religion at all ; whilst their own creed, like their Redeemer, may be spit upon or buffeted by every zealot presiding in them, who may imagine that he renders a service to God and to the State by the injuries or insults he offers to it.

We complain that our Chief Secretary for the time being, when he applies to parliament for votes of money, does not, when he has obtained what is necessary for the public service, apply for some hundred thousand pounds to stay the decline of Protestantism, and suspend the growth of Popery, rather than advance this purpose under the name of grants for schools, hospitals, asylums, and education societies. We do not complain of what is done, it has been done so long and so often, that we can as little doubt of its propriety as my Lord Roden does of his conversion ; but what we complain of is, the misrepresentation and the false pretences which, to the great detriment of public morals, are resorted to by high and in-

fluent characters on these occasions. In their conduct the retainers of the system throughout the kingdom find a precedent and an example, which, as in duty bound, they imitate; *ad exemplum regis totus componitur orbis*; so that in several departments connected with the Church and State, but especially in what regards grants or endowments for education, we find the high qualifications of misrepresentation or embezzlement to prevail.

Leaving these matters, however, to be reported by the commissioners, and judged of by parliament, I shall proceed to submit to you my ideas of education, by whom and in what manner it should be regulated and controlled.

This will necessarily bring me in contact with these societies, which have taken the youth of Ireland under their parental care, and oblige me incidentally to treat of the wild superstition which, under the name of Bible reading or Bible distributing, is now disturbing the peace of Ireland, and threatening the safety of the State. Should my

observations on these subjects be extended, I will throw them into a second letter; and should they appear tedious, I pray you may impute blame to those who have excited such discussions, and not to me, who only endeavour to assist the cause of education, and to divorce it from that religious fanaticism, which in this instance, as in almost every other, is united with dense ignorance, and the most sublimated folly.

Next to the blessing of redemption, and the graces consequent upon it, there is no gift bestowed by God equal in value to a good education; other advantages are enjoyed by the body, this belongs entirely to the spirit; whatever is great, or good, or glorious, in the works of men, is the fruit of educated minds. Wars, conquests, commerce, all the arts of industry and peace, all the refinements of life, all the social and domestic virtues, all the refinements and delicacies of mutual intercourse; in a word, whatever is estimable amongst men owes its origin, increase, and perfection, to the exercise of those faculties, whose improvement is the object of education. Religion

herself loses half her beauty and influence when not attended or assisted by education ; and her power, splendour, and majesty, are never so exalted, as when cultivated genius and refined taste become her heralds or her handmaids. Many have become fools for Christ, and, by their simplicity and piety, exalted the glory of the cross ; but Paul, not John, was the apostle of the nations, and doctors, more even than prophets, have been sent to declare the truths of religion before kings, and princes, and the nations of the earth. Education draws forth the mind, improves its faculties, increases its resources, and by exercise strengthens and augments its powers : I consider it, therefore, of inestimable value ; but like gold, which is the instrument of human happiness, it is, and always must be, unequally distributed amongst men. Some will always be unable or unwilling to acquire it, others will expend it prodigally, or pervert it to the worst ends, whilst the bulk of mankind will always be more or less excluded from its possession.

Doomed as we are to earn our bread by the

sweat of our brow, the great bulk of Adam's posterity will ever be engaged in procuring for themselves the necessaries, or in supplying to others the comforts or luxuries of life; this is the order which providence has established on the earth, whilst, in justice to men, it has taken care that happiness should not depend on station. *Nam fælices agricole sua si bona norint.*

From this disposition, however, it appears, that as we cannot all be legislators, or astronomers, or merchants, or agriculturists, so we cannot all be well educated, not having the means, nor the talent, nor the time necessary to acquire much knowledge.

It behoves, however, the Government of every well educated society, to provide, as far as may be in its power, for each class of its subjects, as much education, and of the best kind, as the latter are capable of receiving with advantage to themselves and security to the public interests.

But as the mind of man, in its unimproved state,

is more under the influence of passions than of reason, hence it is necessary, whilst it is in training, and its energies employed upon itself, that no impressions be made upon it but such as are really calculated to develope and exercise its faculties, or to plant in it the principles of religion and the seeds of virtue. It is a paramount duty, that in the instruction of youth, that milk, not strong food, be given to them; that whatever could introduce error or passion be removed from them; and that their teachers be as intent in forming them to habits of piety and virtue, as in exercising the faculties of their mind.

For these reasons it is that in every state, whether Christian or Pagan, the instruction of youth has been confided to the ministers of religion; for those who are esteemed capable of preaching truth and morality to the community at large, must be deemed most fit to regulate the education of children; he whom the father looks to as an instructor for himself, must, in his opinion, be the very person to whom he would commit the care of his child.

If the State undertook to deprive the parent of the religious guardianship of his own offspring, it would violate one of the first and most sacred rights of nature. Charlemagne, when he compelled the Saxons to receive baptism, did not separate the children from their parents. This would be an injury so gross and revolting, that the most zealous bigot ever ruling in a Christian state has not exercised it towards the Jews; it has been only partially attempted by the framers of our penal code, in whom the devil seems to have dwelt corporeally; yet those insolent societies, who infest our country, and some of whom are aided directly by the State, attempt to take upon themselves this guardianship, and to wrest it, not by law, but by bribes, and terror, and influence, from the parents and pastors, to whom nature and religion consigned it; they force us to exclaim "*quem ad finem sese effrenata jactabit audacia!*" But I would anticipate what I have reserved for these presumptuous men, one of whose officers, like the officer in Swift, might adopt the silly jargon of his brother, and say,

To give a young man a right education,
The *Bible* is the only good book in the nation ;
With your Novids, and Blutarchs, and Omers, and stuff,
..... if I value them this pinch of snuff.

Leaving these societies, however, for a while, and resuming my remarks on the duty of the State to provide education for the people, and on the class of persons to whom the superintendence of it should be confided, I find that the theory laid down by me is not only clear and uncontested, but confirmed also by the practice of every civilized nation.

The legislature in this country has intrusted the regulation and government of schools to chartered bodies, consisting, chiefly, of clergymen, or to the ordinary within his own diocese. The bishop, indeed, is entitled, by that canon law which the Church of England carried away with her at the time of her defection, and which she still holds in common with us, to license every person who keeps a school within his jurisdiction. But these laws of the State and of the Church suppose, as a matter of course, that the creed of

the bishop, and that of the people, is the same : and so it was until the time of what is called the Reformation, in this country, where, however, by one of those astounding fictions in which the law of England delights, it was subsequently declared by Lord Chancellor Bowes, that Catholics were not supposed to exist, unless for the purpose of punishment. If, however, their legal existence be admitted now, is it not monstrous and absurd still to retain the fiction in the face of a nation and of common sense ? And if it be laid aside, and the inhabitants of the country admitted to exist ; and if the Government be disposed to fulfil one of its first and most sacred duties, by providing for the education of the people, is not the course to be pursued obvious ? If proselytism be disavowed by the Government—if the disavowal be sincere—if it be acted upon, why hesitate to intrust the education of the child to his own parent, or to the pastor whom the parent selects ? Why hesitate to confide the instruction of youth to those who are appointed to teach the men ? Why weigh in opposite scales the natural and original rights of the Catholic Clergy in this country, against the

unfounded pretensions and usurped authority of a self-constituted society, or of any society composed of men whose religious opinions would form a very Babel ?—men who have no connexion, or communion, or sympathy, with the people of Ireland ; who feel no interest in giving them such education as their parents wish for, as their religion requires, or as God enjoins ; nay, who feel and profess, many of them, a direct interest or desire in debauching the minds of youth, by withdrawing them from the authority of their parents and pastors, and inducing them to go with themselves afloat upon an ocean of doubt, to be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, the victims of their own ignorance, or error, or passions.

But it is said to the Catholics : you and your Clergy are only tolerated in the State, and therefore the Government cannot be expected to confide to you the regulation of public instruction.

Good God ! how insulting is such language ! how galling to the heart of a man born free, and who has never done an act to forfeit his rights !

But suppressing the movements which such an observation is calculated to excite ; and it being admitted that we are *tolerated* ; if, then, we do deserve to be even tolerated, we deserve to be educated : for otherwise, even as slaves, our value is diminished ; and if it be desirable to educate us, and that it is a crime against nature to withdraw our children from our authority and control, why not permit us to regulate their education ?—why obtrude upon our inalienable rights ?—why infringe upon the parental privilege, of which the Legion itself did not deprive us ?

Do we wish or require to be intrusted with the public instruction ? No : we seek only that the portion of it which regards ourselves be intrusted to us : we do not desire to put our sickle into another man's harvest ; all we require is, that you observe the commandment of Christ: “ Whatever you wish that men do to you, do you to them in like manner ;” you would not confide the instruction of your children to us ; do not oblige us to intrust ours to you.

As to the State bestowing aid—we feel indebted for it—we will be grateful for it; we shall not even think, if you will, that the State exists only for the good of the people, that we are its subjects, that we pay its taxes, supply its luxuries, bear all its burthens, fight and die for its aggrandizement or glory. We will waive all right to the public money, and sit like Lazarus, expecting the crums. All this we will do, only do not afflict us by interposing your authority between us and our children; do not estrange from us the mind or affection of our little ones, or teach them from their infancy to regard the stranger as entitled to their confidence; do not intimate to them that their parent and pastor are unfit to train their mind, and form their heart, or introduce them to the world. If your object be to seduce them from the faith for which we have suffered, and into which they have been baptized, avow it—tell us so—and we will retire with them into the desert, and tell our misfortunes to the rocks: or, we will cease to beget children in our bondage, and let our name be forgotten, and our race extinguished.

Yes, but it is necessary that all the children of the same State be educated together ; and how is this to be effected if the Catholic Clergy be permitted to select the teachers, or regulate the instruction of the youth of their communion ? In the first place, the interests of the many should not be made subservient to those of the few ; but when, as is generally the case, the persons requiring the aid of the State are exclusively of the Catholic religion, their pastors alone should be vested with the right of superintendence and control ; but when the children are of different creeds, the interests of the majority should preponderate, and those of the minority should be consulted for, at least, in a negative way. An assistant, of their own creed, should be provided for them in each school, to watch over their moral conduct and religious improvement.

But let the funds necessary for the education of the poor in Ireland be only vested in commissioners possessing the confidence of the Government and of the people, and all these difficulties will at once cease. In a mixed community, such

as ours, where mutual harmony and good will are to be promoted, and children of different creeds to be educated together, let intruders of no defined creed, whose only religion seems to consist of anti-Catholic zeal, and a senseless enthusiasm about Bible-reading ;—let such intruders be excluded, and let men of fixed and known principles, eminent for their knowledge and moderation, as well as their love of order and attachment to the State ; let such persons be commissioned to dispense the public bounty in a way calculated to promote a well-ordered system of education ; a system which *not only will not interfere with the religious opinions of any, but which will secure the religious instruction of all.* Let such men be employed, and the desires of the Government and of the people will be easily and speedily fulfilled.

Such commissioners would not find it necessary to resort to misrepresentation in order to secure their usurped authority, and cajole parliament out of money, by representing the Catholic Priesthood as hostile to education ; they would not contradict themselves, nor assert in the face of the

nation, that the Catholic priests and people considered the sacred Scriptures as a fit school-book for children ; they would not be so infuriated by sectarian zeal as to convulse the country—setting the father against the son, and the son against the father—the landlord against the tenant, and the tenant against the landlord—only that their favourite scheme of opening the eyes of children, by the perusal of the Word of God, might be advanced ; that the little ones, like Eve, might have their eyes opened, knowing good from evil, and become like gods, seeing and detesting the errors and abominations of popery. Such commissioners would not object to the most unexceptionable characters taking a place among them for the purpose of inspiring confidence, and promoting concord in the community, as if these characters, like that of Horne Tooke, were not sufficiently purified by a quarantine of some forty or fifty years of public service, to take a seat in their immaculate house. Such commissioners would not declare, as a fundamental rule of their proceedings, that they would afford equal facilities of

education to all, without interfering with the religious opinions of any, and in the same sheet publish a contradiction of it, by requiring that in all their schools the sacred Scriptures, without note or comment, should be read by certain classes of the children. Such men would not have the audacious effrontery to repeat incessantly, in contradiction to the public and repeated declarations of every Catholic prelate in Ireland, that such indiscriminate perusal of the sacred Scriptures, without note or comment, was not a direct and mischievous interference with the religion of Catholics. Such commissioners would not, in and out of parliament, by themselves or their agents, excite odium against the Catholic Priesthood, by representing them as hostile to the reading of the Word of God, because, after St. Peter, they considered it liable to abuse in the hands of the ignorant and unsettled, who might wrest it to their own perdition.

But then the systems of education devised and acted upon by these societies are excellent ; and

the books published by them for the use of schools, unexceptionable !

To the first of these observations I would reply by quoting a maxim of law—*Non est major defectus quam defectus juris*: “there is no defect greater than a want of right or title.” These societies have no right or title to interfere with the education of the people, no matter how good their system; let it be applauded by the world, like the book of Plato on the commonwealth, but let it not be obtruded on a nation not yet ripe for so much perfection.

But this system is not excellent; it is defective in a primary and essential quality, it makes no provision for the religious instruction of children, it even excludes such instruction; I say so, because no child ever was or ever will be formed to a Christian life by the mere perusal of the Scriptures. Some person in Waterford quoted with religious horror the saying of a priest, “that the Bible would play the devil with them,” meaning the children: yet the priest thought rightly, though

he expressed himself in the Irish manner, putting the wrong end of the sentiment foremost. The Scriptures would not play the devil with the children, but the devil would play his pranks with the children by means of the Scripture. He quoted it adroitly enough to our Redeemer, saying, “It is written”—ah! and what is not written? I should be sorry to quote all that is written, for if I did, I might, like others, excite a storm against the Church and State;—but “it is written,” said the devil to our Redeemer, “he hath given it in command to his angels that they bear thee in their hands, lest thou hurt thy foot against a stone.” Had a child been there, he might have been tempted by the text to make the experiment suggested by Satan; he might cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple; and if he did, he would, in my opinion, find that the letter of the Scripture had conducted him to ruin.

The Scriptures are useful for many purposes, but if Timothy himself had no other means of being instructed in religion, he never would have been a Christian, much less a bishop, and almost an

apostle. The system of education broached by these self constituted societies is, on this head alone, essentially defective. Next, as to the books published by them being unexceptionable, this assertion is far from being correct: I have seen some books published at Kildare-place, which are so; others I have heard of, to wit, *Select Passages of the Sacred Scriptures*, extracted from the version authorized by law; these are not unexceptionable, but excepted to by our Church; so much so, *that no such extracts can be read with propriety by Catholics, unless they are first revised, and, if necessary, corrected by the proper authorities.*

This objection on our part to the scriptural extracts published by the Kildare-place Society, is applicable to the books circulated by each and all of the other societies. Whereas these books are composed, at least in part, of extracts from a version of the Scriptures which we—(whether justly or not is not here to be discussed,) but which we consider as an adulterated copy of the Word of God. It may be said that the version authorized by law does not differ materially from ours; but

even if this were the case, it would still be objectionable, as nothing can be deemed immaterial in a thing so sacred as revelation ; and John had so much reverence for its integrity, that he anathematizes in his *Apocalypse* whomsoever would add to, or take away from it. Though the adding to or taking away from it are not, perhaps, the very worst modes of perverting it. The taking from it is not so bad, as taking from it and substituting in the room of what is taken some effusion of Beza's spleen, as Catholics charge the English translators with having done.

But the fact is, that the Catholic and Protestant versions differ not in a few places only, or on indifferent subjects, but in several hundred places, and almost on every subject which is controverted between the Churches, wherever these subjects occur, from *Genesis* to *Revelations*. The books circulated by the London Hibernian Society, that society of whose spirit and objects we have lately had so edifying a specimen, are on this ground particularly obnoxious ; one of the first passages quoted in them is from the book of *Genesis*, a part

of which passage, demonstrating the freedom of the human will, is suppressed ; the quotation being thus left imperfect and the truth untold. The Psalms are copiously introduced by these London Instructors of Hibernian Youth, though the Book of Psalms alone contains, as we suppose, more than two hundred passages adulterated in the authorized version.

These school-books of the London Hibernian Society give the English Canon, or list of inspired books, different from that of the Catholic Church, and marks as apocryphal or profane, writings which the Church of God, as St. Augustine expresses it, has always received as inspired. Are these trivial things ? Far be it from a Catholic to suppose so. To him who thinks he can believe a little more or a little less without prejudice to the will of God, these may be trivial ; but to a Catholic, who reveres every iota of the law, even as he does the entire, nothing which regards it can be trivial. It cannot be a matter of indifference to him, to find his child taught to consider as profane whole books of the divine Revelation ; for if he once by his own

judgment, or by the judgment of the London Hibernian Society, or of the Church of England, equally fallible as his own, reject one, or two, or three books, why may he not gradually reject another and another, until he rejects them all, and substitutes for them the pleasing reveries of Rousseau, or the blasphemies of Paine or Carlisle ?

The Lord's Prayer, the best of all prayers—the universal prayer prescribed by our Lord—this is given in the school-books of the London Hibernian Society from the English version, and has therefore an addition to it—“for thine is the kingdom,” &c., which we firmly believe the Lord never added to it. And are our children thus to be puzzled at their very infancy ? A book put into their hands in school, the master also, perhaps, who teaches them, both present to the child a prayer as the best of all, as prescribed by his Redeemer himself ; and yet the child, when he goes home and repeats it for his mother, is told, that it is not the Lord's Prayer. The poor woman already trembles for his orthodoxy, and fears he is half a Protestant ; she consults the priest, and he

tells her, that the prayer, like the rest of the Scriptures, was perverted by Harry the eighth and Elizabeth. Now the old woman's zeal is excited, she repeats from Ward's *Cantos* the dialogue of these deceased sovereigns in hell, and piously pours out her seven thousand curses on their heads.

It is thus the societies work ; the children are unsettled in their principles, they are made to find in their infancy the religion of Christ rather a bone of contention than a bond of peace,—a subject of dispute, not a law of grace,—a source of doubt and anxiety rather than a fixed and settled rule of life. The very Lord's Prayer may become to them not only a subject of dispute, but even of ridicule. I recollect when a boy at school in which Protestants and Catholics were educated, it was customary with the Catholics, by way of jest or reproach, to call their Protestant companions by the name of "Father which," alluding to the obsolete expression retained in the English version of the Lord's Prayer, and retained, no doubt, as a relic of antiquity, to show that the English Church has not

yet abandoned entirely the worship of relics, or all veneration for olden times.

These things may appear trivial to many, but we should recollect that they are at least the forms and circumstances with which Religion loves to be surrounded. Many of our legal forms are, God knows, apparently absurd, and yet they are retained, perhaps wisely retained ; and why should Religion, which holds her courts throughout the earth, whose forms of prayer and worship are consecrated by a usage of 1800 years—why should she strip herself of them, and expose herself naked to the gaze of her suitors ? Why should she suffer the books of her authority, the volume of her statutes, the very form of her proceedings, to be despised, altered, or neglected, as it might suit the caprice of the stripling, of the knave, or the fool, who presumes to teach in her name.

But they are not only the forms of prayer and the words and canon of the Scriptures which are brought into doubt, and exposed to strife, by

these unhallowed societies, but the very substance and essence of the faith.

The mystery of the Trinity and the divinity of our Lord, which, as Tertullian says, are the *cardo fidei*, the very hinges of religion, these are sought to be upturned by some of these men. They endeavour to introduce into a country which has never generated a heresy, that most destructive of all heresies—or as it is called by the Church of England in her last synod, that *wicked* and *damnable* heresy—that frightful Socinianism, which rising from the ashes of Calvin and Beza, has already infected the greater part of their followers even in this empire, and seeks now, like the serpent, to emit its poison against the Church of God.

There has been sent to a Catholic prelate, who is generally confounded with your correspondent, and by the agent of an English nobleman, a book compiled for the use of schools, breathing this heresy from beginning to end, and calculated to instil it secretly into the unsuspecting mind.

This book did not come alone: as is usual, it was accompanied with an offer on the part of this most respected, but deceived nobleman, or his agent, to build or to assist in establishing schools on his extensive estates in this country, if the book thus sent were permitted to be used by the children. Behold, Sir, the conditions implied or expressed on which alone these societies and their dupes or abettors will educate the poor of Ireland. Behold also, and at the same time, the force with which these societies press on an impoverished and broken-hearted people. Funds to the amount of, or exceeding £ 200,000 a year are at their disposal; the influence of the landlord—an influence paramount to every other; the zeal of the inspector; the power of the press and of the tongue—calumnies incessantly repeated; the hallowed name of the Word of God; the thirst of the people for education; their excessive poverty; all these form a moral phalanx more formidable than that of Macedonia, and if God and the unbroken spirit of the people did not assist us, we could not resist it. We have borne many things, but we have never

borne a persecution more bitter than what now assails us. As the persecution of the Church by Julian in the time of peace was more afflicting than that of Nero or Domitian, so what we suffer from these societies, and the power and prejudice they have embodied against us, is more tormenting than what we endured under Anne or the second George.

The tendency of all these societies is one and the same—the subversion, by indirect means, of the ancient faith, and the establishment on its ruin of a wild and ungovernable fanaticism. They have, under the specious pretences of diffusing the Word of God and educating the poor, obtained the money, and the patronage, and the support, of some of the most exalted and liberal characters in both countries. The bigots in Ireland are all with them, actuated chiefly by the deadly hatred they bear to our religion. The Established Church lends them its aid, as it would ally itself with the priests of Baal against those whom it has supplanted; and also because it cannot oppose itself

to sectaries without being taunted with its abandonment of the right of private judgment.

These societies have lately thrown off the mask, which had been too much worn to conceal them ; they have openly avowed their hostility to our faith. They have questioned the authority of those whom God appointed to rule his Church ; they have scoffed at the idea of tradition, and loudly professed the competency of all to read the Word of God without guide or instructor, and become wise by it alone to salvation.

These are the principles of all the societies, without a single exception—the very cardinal points in their system. I shall offer you a few observations on them in another letter, and have the honour to be, &c.

J. K. L.

LETTER VII.

ON EDUCATION IN IRELAND; AND ON BIBLE SOCIÉTIES.

MY DEAR SIR,

ST. AUGUSTINE (Tract. 18. in Joh. cap. 5,) has very justly, observed, that “heresies have sprung up; and certain perverse opinions, ensnaring souls, and precipitating them into the abyss, have been broached, only when the good Scriptures were badly understood; and when that which was badly understood was rashly and boldly asserted.”

We may lament the existence of these opinions; but St. Paul tells us that “heresies must be;” and if they must, we should only make the best use in

our power of them. The same Augustine, in his book on true religion, (cap. 8,) says, that heretics are very useful, not by teaching the truth, which they do not know, but by exciting the tepid Catholics to the study of truth, and the spiritual men of them to the exposition of it. "We use," he adds, "the heretics, not to approve their errors, but that by maintaining the Catholic doctrine against their wiles, we may ourselves become more vigilant and cautious, should we not succeed in bringing them back to the way of salvation."

What this ~~holy doctor~~ says of heresies and heretics, we may apply, with some colour of justice, to those societies of whom I treated, *en passant*, in my last letter, and who, under the pretext of educating the poor, come not to broach any particular error, but to disturb the whole constitution of the Church of God.

For my part, I cannot conceive any heresy or fanaticism more wild or dangerous than that which seeks to upturn the foundation placed by Christ,

and to establish another, or rather nothing, in its place. Innovators generally attacked this or that truth revealed by God, and believed by the faithful, but here no specific error is broached, no particular dogma is assailed ; but it is proposed to cast off, as useless lumber, the men whom the Lord deputed, in his own name, and with his own power, to govern his people until his second coming.

It is proposed to take the law and the testimony out of the hands of the men with whom it was deposited by Christ and his Apostles ; to leave the house of God without a master, his kingdom without a sovereign, his fold without a shepherd, his altar without a priesthood, and his people without a pastor. This system will have no Church to be called "the body of Christ, compact and united ;" but every member is to be a head, every sense to usurp the place of the other ; the Church is no longer to be pillar and ground of truth, but a chaos of opinions more confused than the tongues of Babel ; she is no more to be proof against the powers of hell ; or, divided against herself, she

may continue to stand, contrary to the maxim of Christ ; heresies and sects may devour her very entrails, she is to have no right to reject them. They no longer, like heathens and publicans, can be excluded from the kingdom of God or Christ. If this is to be the case, why hath Isaias, (ch. 54,) addressed this Church, saying, “ Fear not, for thou shalt not be confounded ; and blush not, for thou shalt not be brought to reproach : for thy husband is thy Maker, the Lord God of hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For a little time did I hide my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on thee : for the mountains shall be removed, and the hills shall be overthrown ; but my kindness from thee shall not be removed, and the covenant of my peace shall not be overthrown, saith the Lord, who beareth towards thee the most tender affection : whatever weapon is formed against thee, it shall not prosper, and against every tongue that contendeth with thee thou shalt obtain thy cause : for this is the inheritance of my servants, and their justification from me, saith the Lord.” Why did

the Lord himself promise "that the word which he had placed in her mouth, in the mouths of her Apostles, whom he sent to teach all mankind till the end, should not depart from them, nor from their seed, nor from their seed's seed, from thenceforth nor for ever?" But whatever these Bible Societies may think of the prophet or his divine poetry, it may be worth our while to consider whether Christ has deceived us when he said, "that all power was given to him in heaven and upon the earth; and that as he had been sent himself by his Father, so he sent the twelve to teach all nations, promising to be with them even to the consummation of the world." Why, we should ask, did he say, that "his Spirit would abide with them for ever, would teach them all truth, and suggest to them whatever they had heard from himself; and that whosoever heard them would hear him; and whosoever despised them despised him; and not only him, but the Father who sent him?" Why did he say these things, if they were to have no power or authority to teach? Why did he call these Apostles, as Aaron was called, as he himself was called, when the Father glorified

him, making him a priest after the order of Melchisedech? Why did he call them to the priesthood, and desire them to do as he had done himself, and show forth his death until his coming? Why did he vest them with a power of forgiving sins, of binding and loosing on earth and in heaven? Why, when thus prepared with power and privileges altogether divine, did he give them their last commission, to go and preach his Gospel—the truths which he had heard from his Father, and made known to them, which, during his mission, and for forty days after his resurrection, he had revealed, but not written? Why did he send them to preach these truths to every creature, until the elect would be all gathered in, and the work of the redēption consummated, if their ministry was to be superseded by certain societies?—societies to be formed in after-times, without order, or power, or mission, or authority; having with them not signs, nor wonders, nor tongues, nor prophecies; nothing but a portion of that Gospel which they had purloined from the body to which it was committed by the Lord.

Frightful and impious, Sir, is this system, which thus strikes against the corner-stone of Sion,— which thus upbraids with impotence the Son of God, and discards the Providence which built and rules his Church.

What ! is there no regard to be paid to Christ, or to his election, or appointments ? The Father of mercies, not flesh and blood, had revealed to Peter that his master was the Christ, the Son of the living God ; and a divine charity, bestowed from above, had filled the heart of that Apostle, more than those of his companions. He is, therefore, elected to be the head of his brethren, that there might be no division amongst them, and the powers given to all collectively are given to him alone, and greater powers than these are given to him : not only is he entitled to bind and loose throughout the world, but the very keys of the kingdom are intrusted to him, that he might regulate all power, even as Christ himself, who is head over all the Churches. His prerogatives are not yet filled up. Christ was the corner-stone, the rock—he is about to depart ; but the Church,

whilst in this desert, requires a rock whereon to repose, or at whose fount she may drink the refreshing waters of truth and grace : Peter, therefore, is made a rock, firm and immoveable ; on him the Church, by divine appointment, must be built, that it may be safe against the power of hell. Peter must found it at Jerusalem ; he must engraft the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius on the seed of Abraham—the old trunk of the genuine olive : he must establish his chair at Antioch, fix his see in Rome, plant by the hand of Mark the seed of the Gospel at Alexandria, and collect under the shade of these great patriarchates all the nations of the earth ; James might labour with him, John might pray with him, Paul might run with him ; but if they laboured, or prayed, or ran without him, they would, as the most eloquent and laborious of them testifies, labour, and pray, and run in vain. Whosoever did not gather with him, as Jerome said to his successor Damasus, scattered ; whosoever did not eat the lamb with him was profane. The Redeemer has not yet dismissed him ; he must accumulate upon him the plenitude of his power ; he must pray to the Father specially for

him that his faith should not fail, and that, if infirm for a moment, he might return, and not only return, but confirm his brethren less gifted, less secure than himself. Now, indeed, he is prepared, and at length dismissed to the exercise of all his powers : to feed the lambs, yea, and a second time to feed them, not by violence, or for the sake of base lucre, but to feed them as much by love and example, as by power ; and to feed not only the lambs, but also the sheep—the whole fold, the pastors and the flock.

And this election, this appointment, this commission, these unheard of privileges and powers, merit no consideration from the Bible Societies ; or are these the only truths which cannot be discovered in the Scriptures ? Have none of our societies read these things ? Have these too not been revealed to the simple and the little ones ? Or is it, that these men are always reading, and never come to the knowledge of the truth ? Has their understanding not been opened, that they might understand the Scriptures ? Do they require a Philip to explain them ? Does not the unction of the spirit teach them ? Spiritual men as they

are, can they not judge all things ? Or have they never found that key of knowledge which is kept in the Catholic Church, which opens, and no man can shut; which shuts, and no man can open ? Blind and leaders of the blind, fluctuating and carried about by every wind of doctrine, without apostles, or prophets, or pastors, or doctors, they should not presume to insult the Church of the living God, which is the pillar and the ground of truth ; but venerating the authority instituted by Christ, bend their understanding to his obedience, and seek to obtain by humble and fervent prayer, that faith which, and not the exercise of the Scriptures as Tertullian says, has saved us ; *quos fides salvos fecit non exercitatio Scripturarum.*

The Scriptures alone have never saved any one, they are incapable of giving salvation, it is not their object, it is not the end for which they were written. They hold a dignified place amongst the means of the institution which Christ formed for the purpose of saving his elect; but though they never had been written, this end would have been attained, and all who were pre-ordained to

eternal life, would have been gathered to the Church, and fed with the bread of life.

The Scriptures were given for the most useful ends, as we shall see presently, but it is obvious to all, that they were not written as a regular code of law, still less were they intended to supersede the priesthood. They consist of history, poetry, moral and mystical treatises, as well as of the ordinances prescribed to the Jewish people, they were written generally for some special purpose, in different languages, in various countries, and at periods far removed from each other; and hence, though the entire collection be useful, to instruct, reprove, and direct us in the pursuit of happiness, yet if it be looked to as the means whereby mankind may be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and formed to the Christian discipline, it will be found totally inadequate to such a purpose.

In the hands of the ministry, which Christ, like Moses, so clearly established, the Scriptures have been, and are, most useful. Without them, it

would require more than the ordinary providence of God to preserve the deposit of faith whole and entire. From them, also, it is that the pastor exhorts, reproves, beseeches, in all patience and doctrine; to them the doctor refers for the proofs of those truths and duties which he expounds; in them the supreme pastor, as well as his brethren charged with the care and government of the Church, find those laws which they are bound to enforce, as well as the patent of their own authority, the nature and extent of their power, and the rules according to which it should be exercised. To the faithful, in like manner, they were and are not only sources of infinite consolation, but a principal means whereby they are brought up and perfected in the knowledge and observance of the will of God. Thus, both priests and people, the wise and the unwise, the saint and the sinner, find recorded in them those ineffable mysteries, those prodigies of divine power, justice, and mercy, those supports in trial and checks in prosperity, those lessons and examples, those chastisements and rewards, which contribute so powerfully to induce us (prone, as we are, to evil

from our youth) to mortify the flesh, and live by the spirit; to be crucified to the world, and to esteem all things as dung for the sake of Christ and of that unspeakable glory which will be revealed hereafter in his elect. But the societies, or individuals, who would substitute the reading of those Scriptures for the office of the ministry itself, seem not to comprehend the substance or the form of the Gospel dispensation.

Their system is opposed essentially to the views of St. Paul.

This Apostle quotes the prophet Isaias, saying, in the name of the Apostles of the new law, "Who hath believed our report; and the arm or power of the Lord, to whom hath it been revealed," or "made known?" From this text St. Paul infers, that faith is from the Word of God conveyed to the soul by *hearing*, and not by *reading*: indeed if it were by the latter means, not one, perhaps, in a thousand of the elect could have believed. Another part of the Apostle's induction is put in the form of an interrogatory: "How," he asks, "will they,"

that is, the persons to be converted, "how will they hear without a preacher?" So little did St. Paul know of the distribution of the Bible without note or comment; and so satisfied was he, that the religion which he preached could not be propagated, unless by the tongues of men. Ah! but, say the Bible Societies, we have our missionaries. Unfortunately, however, for the whole tribe of these gentlemen, their wives and children included, the Apostle is not done with his argument; he asks again another most inconvenient question: "*How*," he says, "*will they preach unless they be sent?*" Let us here pause for a moment, and consider by whom the preachers are to be sent; whether Lord Teignmouth, (I believe his lordship is the president of the great Leviathan,) whether he, or the young gentlemen, or old ladies, his lordship's venerable coadjutors, whether they have got any commission to send forth preachers of the Word! Good God! to what a vile condition would these men reduce the Church, that most magnificent fabric of the divine wisdom! Let us pursue the inquiry, however.

According to St. Paul, no one can take upon himself the priesthood, nor, of course, any office growing out of it, unless he be called as Aaron was ; unless, also, amongst other things, hands be imposed on him, and he sent to the work, as Paul himself and Barnabas were sent. Even this does not appear to be sufficient ; regular vocation, ordination, and mission, from those who received it from Christ, or from those who succeeded to his disciples ; all this would not appear to be sufficient, unless the person sent to preach compare his Gospel with that of Peter, and those who are with Peter, though he were called from heaven, he may, as Paul testifies of himself, be only running in vain. He may, if he be not in the body of which Peter is the head, make for himself, as Cyprian says, a *human Church*, an *adulterous Church*, (oh, shade of Harry, hear it !) but he cannot add to the Church of God if he be separated from him on whom alone Christ built it. If he be not in the body of Christ, in the unity of Christ, God will not exhort through him ; if he have broken, through charity, that bond of perfection which unites all the brethren ; or if he

tear, as Cyprian again has it, by his wicked separation, the seamless cloak of Christ, whatever doctrine he teaches is a matter of indifference—he belongs not to the Church. No imaginary **CALL** will entitle him to lay his profane hand to the Gospel. No : he must be called as Aaron was, as Christ was, as the disciples were, as Paul was, as Timothy, and Titus, and Mark, and Clement were. No pretended necessity can justify him : for no necessity, says St. Agustine, can justify a breach of unity. He cannot, according to the idea of St. Paul, be “a member of Christ, or a dispenser of the word or mysteries of God,” if he usurp the right of another, obtrude himself into the ministry, or presume to preach without being sent; aye, and sent too, not by the Bible, or Home, or Foreign Missionary Society, but by those who alone were commissioned to teach all nations, and with whom Christ, according to his promise, remains—teaching all days, even to the end of the world. I should like exceedingly to hear the connexion between this body and the missionary societies clearly proved.

But leaving the missionaries on their travels, let us take another glance at the system of preaching the Gospel, by distributing Bibles without note or comment. I believe this system was as little known to the Redeemer himself as to the prophet Isaias, or to St. Paul. "If I," says Christ, speaking of the Jews, "had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin," or be guilty of resisting the light of faith. And again, "If I had not done amongst them works such as no other had done; they would have an excuse for their sin." He, therefore, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, intimates clearly enough, that the Gospel should be *preached*, and not only preached, but until the Church was established like a city on the mountain top, like a beacon on a high hill, that miracles also were necessary to induce men to deny impiety and worldly desires, and become a people acceptable to God—followers of good works. It was by such means that the Apostles, as it is said in the Acts, preached, and the Lord confirmed their words by signs. Thus the centurion on Calvary believed when the rocks were rent, and

the sun obscured. Thus Sergius Paulus believed when he saw the wonders wrought by Paul, and the efficacy of his prayer. For these signs and wonders the Church (without whose authority Augustine would not believe the Gospel) is generally a sufficient substitute, but for the lawful preaching of the Word of God there can be no substitute, because the Lord has contemplated none, no, not even the Bible Society, with Lord Teignmouth at its head.

But this system is not more foreign to the views of Christ, than its immense efforts are fruitless in the godly work it has proposed to itself.

The types sweat, the press teems, vessels are freighted for it, and all to no purpose ! It drives an immense trade, profitable no doubt to many, in Bibles and missionaries ; it squanders hundreds of thousands upon expeditions more senseless than the most foolish of Sir Walter Raleigh's ; and, like that pirate, it repays its dupes with reports of what never had existence. It would be endless to recount the delusions which are practised by the

missionaries in this regard. But there is one fact, which has been vouched to me by an authority which is unquestionable, which fact, as a curiosity in its way, I shall take leave to mention. Among other languages into which the authorized version of the English Bible has been translated, is the Romaic, with a view of converting the modern Greeks to English Christianity. A cargo of these Bibles was sent out to the Ionian Islands, and the High Commissioner, as well as some subordinate functionaries, were induced to lend the project the sanction of their names as subscribers. The day came for distributing the Word to the Zantists and Cephalonians, and to the lieges of young Telemachus's patrimony,—when, behold! the Greek bishop entered the conclave, and declared, that no version of the Romaic Bible would be allowed except a certain edition printed at Leipsic, and bearing the imprimatur of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Latin bishop entered a little after, and denounced all translations save that which coincided with the venerable Vulgate of the Catholic Church. Both added, that if even the version was unexceptionable in point of authority,

they would object against its circulation on grounds of doctrine. This was quite sufficient for Sir Frederick Adam for preventing their diffusion, for more vulgar reasons than state policy. He speedily saw what sad work the system would make among the Ionians, and the Romaic Bibles accordingly reposed in some merchant's or government warehouse. Yet in the next Report of the Bible Societies, we shall be told, no doubt, of the amiable ductility of the modern Greeks, and of the enthusiasm they displayed at the very sight of the sacred volume in their own tongue. Thus it is that the English people are gulled out of their money;—thus it is that fortunes are made for the Printers and Booksellers, and itinerant Charlatans. As to the notable scheme of the Irish Bible, that is too absurd to need exposure. But it answers the purpose of cheats and hypocrites—“Put money in thy purse—*rem, quounque modo rem.*”

We never yet were furnished with a proof that these societies had converted a single tribe, or a people, or a nation, to the faith, no not one! And what is more, it is impossible they would; for “no

one can come to Christ unless the Father draw him," and he can never draw any one by a system which is opposed to the constitution of his Church. They may make many hypocrites, and cause thousands who are already tossed about by every wind of doctrine, to exchange one error for another; they may count many converts, such as a certain distinguished nobleman, on their lists, and induce numberless old maids to exchange their monkeys or lap-dogs for the Bible, but it is quite impossible they could ever propagate the kingdom of God upon the earth.

I recollect when the charter of the East India Company was last renewed, Warren Hastings gave in evidence before a committee of the House of Commons, that during his government in the East, Catholic Missionaries alone made converts. Individuals of my own family have spent some years in the Company's service; one of my earliest and most intimate friends, a Portuguese priest, is, and has been for some years, a missionary on the Coromandel coast. I have conversed with several respectable and *disinterested* persons who spent many

years in India, and from all the information I have been able to collect from these various sources, I am convinced, that the state of the missions in that country at present, is substantially the same as it was in the time of Warren Hastings. The only converts made by the Missionary Societies (for the Bibles have made none at all) are some few Hindoos who had lost their *caste*, and who listen for hire to the preaching of those who pay them. And though the maxim *ex uno discere omnes*, "judge of all the other infidel countries by this one," may not be logically correct, yet I presume it would in this instance be found sufficiently so, had we but the means of ascertaining the justice of its application.

Let these societies, with all their Bibles, and all their agents throughout the globe, produce to us—not such fruits as sprung from our missions in China, in Siam, in Japan, in Asia Proper, in the Philippine Islands, in Paraguay, throughout South America, and the islands in the Gulf of Mexico, —no: but let them produce to us authentic proofs of as many conversions as were effected through

the ministry of St. Francis Xavier in one year, aye, or in one day, and I will become the advocate of the Bible and of the Home and the Foreign Missionary Societies.* Ah, no ! the fields with these societies are always white for the harvest, ready for the sickle, but they are never cut or gathered in.

Then as to their labours in Christian countries ; they tell us of Russia, and of their immense manufactory in that country, yet I doubt whether they have converted a single Cossack or boor ; and if they did, they would only take them from a schismatical Church to no Church at all. In Germany and Switzerland, amongst the Protestant Churches, they are quite at home. Yes, in these countries where that infidelity which Toland, Tyndal, and Bolingbroke, first introduced from England to the continent, and which was propagated with such

* It is to be observed, that all the nations of Europe not connected with the Greek Church, were converted by missionaries in communion with the See of Rome, and many of them at periods when she, in the opinion of Protestant Writers, was immersed in idolatry !

malignant perseverance by their disciple Bayle, competes with a frightful fanaticism, so that one knows not which of them will gain the ascendancy.

In France these societies are only abetted by the Calvinists and Infideles, and it is a fact, of which I have been informed by a gentleman, of whose veracity and knowledge of the matter I can have no doubt, that the Bible has been circulated in that country by the very men who lately published cheap editions of Rousseau's *Emile*, and of the *Pucelle d'Orleans*, for the purpose of corrupting youth; nor do I think that these men have acted inconsistently. Had the chain with which Henry the eighth tied the Bible to the preaching desk in England never been broken, that country would not have witnessed the scenes which her history records, and she might this day be the most free and happy nation on the earth, reposing in the bosom of the Catholic Church.

Wherever the reading of the Bible is not regulated by a salutary discipline such as ours, it leads a great portion of the people necessarily to

fanaticism or to infidelity. The French infidels know this well, and hence their alliance with the Bible Societies.

But as to the progress of these Societies amongst Catholics, whether in France or in any other country on the continent, it is precisely the same as on the banks of the Shannon or the hills of Killarney ; and all they state to the contrary is a collection of falsehood transmitted home, or manufactured here, by men who fare sumptuously every day on the fruit of these their unhallowed labours.

They tell us of the number of Bibles they distribute, and where is the difficulty of thus sowing the seed by the side of the highways ? Do not the pawn-offices in every town bear testimony of the profusion there is of what these saints quaintly call “ the bread of life,” of what we Catholics call Protestant Bibles ; books on which our peasantry look not with reverence, but with dread.

I heard of a poor man in the County Kildare,

who, if I gave him a Bible approved of by the Church, would venerate it more than any thing he possessed, but having been favoured by the lady of his master with one of the Societies' Bibles without note or comment, accepted of it with all the reverence which the fear of losing his situation inspired. But, behold! when the night closed, and all danger of detection was removed, he, lest he should be infected with heresy exhaled from the Protestant Bible during his sleep, took it with a tongs, for he would not defile his touch with it, and buried it in a grave which he had prepared for it in his garden!! Should a pious old lady of the Society ever read this anecdote, the hair of her head will start up, the frightful figure of Popery pass before her eyes, and she will rehearse devoutly the prayer of the Gunpowder Plot. Yet I, who have read portions of the Bible every day these twenty years and upwards, who have devoted many an hour to the study of it, who have often explained it to others, who have collected sixteen or eighteen editions of it in different languages, who, like Augustine, find in it infinitely more beyond my comprehension than I can understand—I, who am

thus a very Bibleman, do admire the orthodoxy of this Kildare peasant;—nay, I admire it greatly; and should I happen to meet him, I shall reward him for his zeal.* But his conduct furnishes to the Societies an admirable lesson, did they know but how to profit of it; it should teach them why they can make no impression on the Irish Catholics, nor, indeed, on any Catholics, and should induce them to reflect on that admirable and truly divine principle of our Church, which makes us all one, even as Christ and his Father are *one*. It should teach them, that whilst we love and cherish the reading of the Word of God, as I have abundantly shown in my “Vindication of the religious and civil Principles of the Irish Catholics;” yet that we always are, and, with the divine assistance,

* This Kildare peasant and his admirer have been sadly dealt with; they have been treated by the *saints* as perpetrators or abettors of sacrilege; but what is worse, they are irreclaimably perverse, and continue to glory in their imputed impiety. The peasant declares he will never *touch* a Protestant Bible, and J. K. L. still applauds his orthodoxy; whilst both venerate the Bible of the Catholic Church as one of the best gifts of God.

always will be, steadfast and unbending in excluding from amongst us the gifts of the Bible Society, and of all her filiations, as well as in proving our obedience to the authority of that Church, against which not their machinations, nor the gates of hell itself, ever will or can prevail.

As a general conclusion from the foregoing observations, it seems to me, 1st, that these Societies are embarked in propagating an intolerable error, by seeking to introduce the indiscriminate perusal of the sacred Scriptures, without note or comment, and substituting a *chaos* of undisciplined opinion for the wisdom, and order, and power, of the Church of God ; 2nd, it appears to me that their labours, so far from being in accordance with the spirit of the Christian religion, are calculated to subvert it, and to plant in its room fanaticism or infidelity ; 3dly, I am clearly of opinion, that these labours hitherto have been, and must continue, fruitless, whether in converting infidels, or in disturbing Catholicity, whilst they have increased the confusion of the Protestant Churches, and may ultimately subvert them altogether. I have not

as yet, however, closed my accounts with them. I said at the commencement, that they are opposed to tradition : I shall, therefore, proceed to inquire with what justice they presume to attack this, one of the fundamental truths of religion.

In rejecting tradition, the Bible Societies have the merit of being consistent : for if the Scriptures, without note or comment, without a ministry or liturgy, be sufficient to make men wise unto salvation, why admit tradition ? It would, in their system, be like bringing coals to Newcastle : nor do they act in this respect without a precedent. We have it upon record, in the confession of faith exhibited to the seventh General Council, by Basil of Ancire, that this error concerning tradition was common to Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Dioscorus—worthy predecessors of the Bible Society ! Augustine disputing against Maximinus, and Epiphanius, Her. 73, also impute it to the Arians. They themselves profess it in the Synod of Seleucia. St. Basil attributes it to Eunomius. Tertullian, in his Præscriptions, and Irenæus, in his 3rd book, 2nd ch. against heresies, charge Valentinian and

Marcian with rejecting tradition. So that I know of nothing criminal or impious in all antiquity which is not connected with our modern fanatics by this disregard for tradition. And why not? These ancients became what they were only because they separated themselves from the Church, and appealed for a justification of their errors and rebellion from tradition to the Scriptures ; yes, to those Scriptures by which, as Tertullian remarks in the book before quoted, there could be no victory obtained over them ; or if obtained, it would be useless, as when convicted they would argue still :

Like our young Briton, and the Scottish tar,
His worthy messmate in the Bible war.

You will excuse, Sir, my paraphrase on a distich of the Dunciad ! But then as to tradition, which these Societies so superciliously reject.

For our part, we find no truth of religion more expressly recorded in the Scriptures themselves, more frequently insisted on by the primitive fathers

of the Church, nothing more consonant to right reason, than the existence of tradition.

“ Stand to and keep,” says St. Paul, 2 Thess. ch. 2, “ the traditions which you have received, whether by letters or by word.” These traditions did not, it appears, originate with Paul: no, like St. Luke, he collected them from those who, from the beginning, were the witnesses and the ministers of the Word. He only handed them down to the Thessalonians as he did to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 11, whom he praises for observing them, and to whom he promises that on his arrival he would arrange whatever was not yet regulated in their Church, and which arrangements are recorded in tradition. He had been instructed himself by the Lord, not by letter, but by word, as to the institution of the blessed Eucharist; and the form of celebrating it, which he prescribed at Corinth, is no where found written in the Scriptures. The breaking of the host, the mixing of water with the wine, the very words used in blessing the chalice of benediction—these are not written in the Scriptures, yet all antiquity testifies that they

were handed down by the Apostles. The perpetual virginity of the Mother of God, the descent of Christ into hell, the baptism of infants, its being conferred by aspersion, the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, the very sanctification of the Lord's day, the canonicity and divine inspiration of each and all of the books in the sacred canon, as well as numberless other particulars, are either not written, or not so distinctly written as they are believed in the Church; but they are not the less revealed by God on that account; they are a part of that good deposit which Timothy received from Paul, 2 Tim. 1.; of that form of sound speech which this latter delivered to his beloved disciple before many witnesses, and which he commanded him to intrust to faithful men, who would be fit also to teach others. John also, 2d Ep. left many things unwritten, which he would not commit to paper and ink; but promised to speak them with his tongue to those disciples whom he hoped to see. Peter wrote but two epistles: and did he spend seven years at Antioch and twenty-five at Rome, without committing to these Churches any additional truths; or did he not, as Tertullian

exclaims, pour out to the latter all his knowledge with his blood ?

That the Apostles delivered the Gospel partly by writing, partly by word of mouth, is attested by Dionysius, supposed by some to be the Areopagite converted by St. Paul, lib. de Ec. Hier. cap. 1. Clem. Alex. lib. de pasch., quoted by Eusebius, lib. 6. Hist. Eccl. cap. 2.; and again, lib. Strom. 1. and 5. Orig. Hom. 5. in num.; Papias quoted also by Euseb. lib. 5. c. 39.; Egesip, and Ignatius by the same, lib. 3. ch. 36.; Iren. lib. 3. c. 3, 4.; Tertul. de Corona Militia. Cyprian de Ablutione ped. Epiphan. throughout his whole work on heresies, but chiefly against the Arians; Jerom. adv. Lucif. Basil. lib. de S. Sancto, cap. 27, and 29.; Augustin, lib. 2. de Bapt. adv. Don. cap. 7, and lib. 4. ch. 24, and lib. 5. ch. 23 and 26.

These great luminaries of the Christian law attest with one voice the existence of tradition, "that it is the Word of God, not less deserving of reverence than what is written;" that "the Church is enriched by it;" that "she detects and refutes

all heresies by it;" that "she brings her children to God by it;" that "it alone is sufficient to refute all error;" that "a deviation from it, or contempt of it, is the fruit of pride and the source of heresy;" that "the wisest men who deviate from it go astray;" that "in all doubts recourse is to be had to it."

Whether the testimony of such men, added to that of the Apostles themselves, is more deserving of attention than the opinions of those personages who compose the Bible and other Societies, it remains for men of sense to judge.

The truth is, that tradition is a part and parcel of divine revelation, or rather revelation once consisted of tradition exclusively, a portion of which was afterwards recorded in writing. The belief in a Redeemer to come, the substance and form of the sacrifices to be offered to God, the rite of circumcision as prescribed to Abraham, were all preserved by tradition to the time of Moses. The Israelites lived in Egypt under this traditional law. Hilary and Origen, and all the learned

Jews tell us, that when Moses received the law on Sina, there was also communicated to him the secret meaning of it, (and that it had a secret meaning St. Paul abundantly proves in his epistle to the Hebrews,) and that he was commanded to write the law for the people, but to impart the secret explication of it only to Josue, who in the same manner was to transmit it to the chiefs of the priesthood. Anatolius, quoted by Euseb. lib. 7. ch. 28, says also, that the seventy interpreters answered to the inquiries of Ptolemy many things from the traditions of Moses. To this tradition the Psalmist seems to refer, saying, Ps. 43 and 77, “Lord, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us;” and “what mighty and many things hath he commanded to our fathers to be made known to their sons.”

But leaving the old dispensation, and proceeding to the new.

Christ wrote no Gospel, nor do we know that he commanded one to be written. He commanded

his disciples to preach it to every creature ; they had no types nor presses to put in requisition. It was a law, says Paul, 2 Cor. iii., administered to us, and written not with ink, but by the spirit of the living God ; not on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tablets of the heart. Jeremy, c. 30, had foretold its character, saying, "I will give my law in their bowels, and on their heart will I write it."

Mathew wrote his Gospel for the consolation of the converted Jews whom he left after him in the land of his fathers. Mark, who was the companion of Peter, took an abridgment of the Gospel of St. Mathew with him when he went to found the Church in Egypt. Luke's Preface to the Acts shows why he wrote a book which might be denominated the Gospel of the Holy Ghost, or the life of St. Paul. John wrote his Gospel at the desire of the bishops of Asia, as St. Jerome says, to put a stop to the heresies, I think, of Ebion and Cerinthus. We all know that the divine epistles of St. Paul were written for particular occasions ; so that the New Scriptures, like the Old, were founded on tradition, and given as helps to the

Church, but by no means as a regular record of the Christian religion. This is testified by Chrysostom, by Theophylactus, by Jerome, as also by Irenaeus, who says, "that if the Apostles had left us nothing written, we should follow the order of the tradition of the Church," to wit, that which was observed before the Gospels were written.

Common sense taught the wisest of mankind to act in their business as the Spirit of Wisdom taught the Apostles how to dispose of the trust committed to them, and there is a greater analogy between true religion and common sense, than many persons seem to suppose.

Anaxagoras, Thales, Socrates, taught their disciples by word of mouth, not by writing. The same practice was observed by Pythagoras, as all the ancients testify, with this difference, that he took more care than the others that the secrets of his science should not be divulged. Clem. of Alex. l. lib. Strom. tells us, that this philosopher underwent circumcision in Egypt, in order to gain admission to the secrets of the Egyptian sages.

Galen, lib. 2. *de Anat.* assures us, that the science of medicine was handed down by tradition. Cicero, lib. 1. *de leg.* writes, that all things in a state are not to be regulated by written laws.— And the man who divulged the secrets of Numa was put to death for his rashness. Plato, like Pythagoras, as Joh. Pic. writes in his *Apology*, thought that whatever was most important in science should be taught by the tongue, but not written. Lysias, the Pythagorean, accused Hipparchus of revealing to the crowd the secrets of his science, and for doing so he was publicly expelled from his school. We all know the celebrated remark of Socrates on this subject. So that common sense teaches that we should not throw pearls to swine, expose what is sacred to the insult of the profane, or render it vile by familiarity to the crowd. Thus St. Paul seemed to know nothing in public, but Christ and him crucified; but he adds, that he spoke wisdom amongst the perfect. If the law of secrecy, as it was observed in the Church even to the fifth century, (I hope the Biblemen will not deny there was such a law,)—but if this law never had existence, we

could not believe that the Apostles would expose, in writing, to the pagan world, to be scoffed at, or to the undisciplined Neophytes, to be thought lightly of, those mysteries and sacraments which constitute the life and essence of the Christian dispensation. It was necessary, therefore, at the beginning, as a matter of ecclesiastical economy, that all that was revealed should not be written; and that tradition, in which the entire of the new law at first consisted, should preserve and regulate whatever was most awful and sacred in the Christian dispensation. But tradition was not more necessary for preserving the deposit, than it was for the right understanding of what was written.

To prove, with St. Peter, that in the Scriptures there are many passages hard to be understood, is quite superfluous. Every man, not entirely a senseless fanatic, knows and admits it; and that the diversity of opinion about their meaning is not a matter of indifference—a little wood, hay, or stubble, piled up on the foundation, which may be burned or not. That the difference of opinion about the meaning of the Scriptures is not so tri-

vial, is equally clear from the words of the Apostle. He says that this wrangling about texts, this wresting of the Scripture by the ignorant and the unsettled—those, to wit, who are tossed about by every wind of doctrine—ends, not like a comedy, in the union of the parties, but in perdition, in that mist of darkness, or lake of fire, where those who do not obey the Gospel will, according to St. Paul, suffer punishment for ever, far from the face of God.

It is not the believing a little more or a little less, nor a story about the withered hand, nor any such fulsome nonsense, which will settle the matter: the ways of God are not as our ways; the Holy Ghost has told us that there is but one faith: *not a word has he said about a little more or a little less of it*; but he has said, it is ONE; and that without it, it is impossible to please God. And if we want to know what that faith is, let us not wrangle about texts, which the devil himself could quote as flippantly as the most devout Bibleman; but let us do what Moses prescribed to be done, what Christ prescribed to be done, what common

sense and the practice of mankind prescribed to be done ; let us go up, like Paul and Barnabas, and their friends, from Antioch, and hear what Peter, and those who are with him, say about it ; let us hear what seems good to the Holy Ghost and to them, or to those who were to be teaching in their place to the end of the world ; let us hear what they command us to think and do upon the matter. If we hear them, we hear Christ, who is with them all days, even to the end of the world ; but if we despise them, and Christ, and his Father with them, we must only take our place amongst the heathens and publicans, where we will have ample leisure to print and distribute Bibles, and dispute about them to our hearts' content.*

* The advocates of the Bible Society generally maintain the very absurd doctrine of certain essential and non-essential articles of faith ; and, consequently, suppose that no person can be cast out of the Church. In fact, they do not admit that there are such evils in Christianity as heresy or schism ; or, if they admit their existence, they deny that they exclude such as are guilty of them from the kingdom of God.

The Socinians were the first to avow this impiety, saying that whosoever believed in God, and in the mission of Jesus

We had better not say to them as Core did to Moses : who are you who would lord it over your brethren ; who would gather all things to yourself and to your tribe ? Are not we also children of Jacob, heirs of the promises, of the seed of Abraham ? Have we not the testament as well as you ? Are we not born in the covenant ? Why should we not share in the authority, or at least be en-

Christ, could be saved. After the Synod of Charenton, where the Lutherans and Calvinists entered into a compromise, Callixtus, a Lutheran, propagated this error in Germany. Pajou first, and afterwards Jurieu, as Bossuet tells us in the fifteenth book of his *Variations*, where he treats this subject at large, published and supported it in France ; and though it is directly opposed to all and each of the professions of faith, or to the synodical decrees of the Protestant Churches throughout Europe, yet it has found many abettors amongst the individuals who compose these Churches : so in like manner, whilst it literally dissolves the Christian religion into pure Deism, it is embraced warmly, nay clamorously, by the Bible Societies.

The *Saints*, deceived by the specious charity of this system, and delighted by its opposition to Popery, overlook altogether its incompatibility with the doctrine of Christ and of his apostles, and with that of the Churches to which they

titled to dispute with you about the text of the law ?

Core spoke to the passions, he deluded the multitude, he divided the people of God, he resisted authority ; but for this, he and his adherents were swallowed alive in hell. Jude, the apostle, directly and expressly applies his conduct and his

themselves nominally belong. No person supposes these saints cognizant of its condemnation by the primitive Christians, of whose faith and practice they are profoundly ignorant, though they cease not to appeal to "the apostolic times," as the senseless Jews, who, whilst they trampled on the covenant, vociferated, "The temple of the Lord !—The temple of the Lord !"

It is perfectly useless to inquire of the Biblemen, deluded as they are, or maddened by enthusiasm, what the Redeemer meant when he said to the twelve together, or to Peter alone, "Whatsoever you will bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you will loose on earth will be loosed in heaven :" or when he decreed that "whosoever did not hear the Church was to be considered as a heathen and a publican." They will not recognize in these words any power vested in the rulers of the Church to excommunicate those who are obstinate in error; or they will contend, that a

fate to heretics, who, with the Bible in their hand, bring in sects of perdition, despise the evangelical tradition, and blaspheme authority, out of the Word of God.

What, let me be allowed to ask, what is heresy, if it be not our own choosing of an opinion different from the opinion of the Church, and ad-

Christian may be cast out of the body of Christ, without ceasing to be connected with its head; that he may be as a heathen and a publican before the Lord, and yet partake of the fruits of the redemption; that he may resist, openly and obstinately, the doctrine of the Church—the very pillar and ground of truth—and yet partake of her communion and charity; that he may be laden with her curses, branded with her anathemas, and though he be so, nay though, in addition to all this, he oppose and persecute her, yet that he is still within her pale, and destined to be glorified along with her!

When St. Paul, St. John, St. Jude, described to us the nature of sects and heresies, declaring that they excluded from the kingdom of God; when they instructed us to shun heretics, as men who were subverted, who had no foundation whereon to build, or even to stand; who were actually condemned by their own judgment—that is, by following their

hering obstinately to it? As if Christ were divided, or as if there could be *two faiths*. It is not the believing a little more, or a little less, the piling up a little wood, hay, or stubble, which constitutes it at all; it consists essentially in the choosing to judge for ourselves, in refusing to hear the Church, in despising her pastors, and adhering obstinately to our own erroneous opinion, no matter whether

private opinion in opposition to that of the Church—whose error crept like a cancer; when the Apostles wrote these things for our instruction, they were, according to the Bible-men, only abusing our credulity, and driving us into a belief quite opposed to the designs of God!

What Clement wrote to the Corinthians, the doctrine of Ignatius in all his Epistles, the entire book of Cyprian on the Unity of the Church, written in the time of Cornelius, predecessor of Lucius, predecessor of St. Stephen, must now be reputed silly or anti-christian; whereas the modern evangelists have discovered that schisms are harmless, heresies very tolerable, whilst these ancients reputed them worthy of everlasting death—crimes which even martyrdom could not efface.

If the fathers who composed the first council of Constantinople lived in our days, they need not, when explaining the creed of Nice, have added to the article on the Church, the

LETTER VII.

great or small. A man might err to any truth of religion; but he would at account be an heretic. I do not mean to whether whosoever in this country leans upon invincible ignorance may not lean upon a broken reed; but it is obstinacy added to error, which induces men to *separate* themselves, and to bring in sects and originate heresies, a crime

words **ONE** and **APOSTOLIC**; they might have learned, that there may be many Churches not united in one body, and that a Wesley or Butterworth has as good right to found a Church as St. Peter or St. John. Even the council of Nice itself, to which the entire Christian world, the Arians and Socinians excepted, used to pay homage,—even this council might receive new lights did it exist in our times. The fathers of Nice say, “when they (the Novatians and Paulinists, or followers of Paul of Samosata, the schismatics and heretics are classed together) return to the Church:” what blockheads these fathers of Nice were, to suppose that these impious sectaries were out of the Church, because forsooth they had been cast out. How we could, now that the Gospel is translated into every known tongue, have taught them that those Novatians and Paulinists were only exercising the natural and inherent right of judging for themselves, and enjoying the liberty with which Christ had made them free, whilst they

which not even martyrdom, if we believe St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine, can efface, and which St. Paul expressly tells us, exclude from the kingdom of God. .

Had the people of Antioch adhered to the observance of the Mosaic rites as necessary, after the decree of the Church at Jerusalem, Christ

protested against a pope, whom the whole world, except the Novatians, recognized. This council proceeds to condemn the Arians, "whom," it says, "the HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH anathematizes." What fatuity possessed these old fathers of Nice ! In treating of sects and heresies they seem to follow in the footsteps of Christ and the Apostles, and to set themselves up exclusive judges in matters of faith, dealing out damnation indiscriminately against all those who refused to hear the Church, without distinction of crime or error, essential or non-essential truth or doctrine. How much these venerable fathers would be edified could they but hear of our modern discoveries in religion, and know, as the Bible Society does, that there is no Church to teach, to condemn, to excommunicate : or that her doctrine is to be tried by the test of private judgment, and her censures to affect only such as have not pride or presumption sufficient to disregard them.

Protestant prelates or other ecclesiastical superiors, use

would be of no use to them, more than to the Galatians; though it is to be observed, that these rites, until the synagogue was buried, were in themselves matters of indifference, as appears from Paul's own occasional observance of them, as well as from his circumcising Timothy, in order to conciliate the Jews. The error of the Quarto-decimans, our pious ancestors, according to Sir Richard Musgrave, was much like this; they might, if any people could, be allowed to believe a little more or a little less, especially when they quoted in their favour the name and authority of St. John the evangelist: yet they had no alterna-

the following words, or others equivalent to them, when they excommunicate: "We cut off this rotten member from the society of the faithful, that he may be as a heathen and a publican." It would be highly gratifying to the public to know whether the prelates of the Established Church attribute to these words the same force and meaning, as would have been assigned them by the fathers of Nice and the apostles; or whether they think with the Biblentines, that they are mere symbols, *sonus et nil amplius*. I fear much that the latter is their opinion, and that there are more disciples of Tillotson and Hoadley on the bench, than of Athanasius or Paul.

tive, after the council of Nice, but to surrender their opinion, and relinquish their practice, or take their station amongst the heathens. As Pope Stephen wrote, on a question pretty much of similar import, *Nil innovetur nisi quod traditum est*—they should abide by tradition, or become heretics.

Egisippus, quoted by Euseb. lib. 3. ch. 32, writes, that the Church continued a virgin, and immaculate, during the lifetime of the Apostles; the corrupters of the truth (if any there were) lurking in the caverns of the earth, and not daring to appear, because they could not withstand the authority of traditionary truth. And Ignatius, quoted by the same, lib. 5, says, that the contagion of the heretics is to be avoided, by adhering strictly to the tradition of the Apostles. Tertullian says, they are to be opposed more by tradition than by Scripture; because the latter, but not the former, he adds, can be easily warped to different meanings. There is no heretic, as St. Hilary writes to Constantine, there is no heretic who does not appeal to the Scripture for a proof of his blasphemies: they all speak Scripture, but with-

out meaning; that, as Iren. lib. 1. adv. Her. says, they may confirm their errors by texts. They do in this, says Vincent of Lerins, what their father did before them, whose crafty wiles they imitate: for what will he not attempt against weak men who tempted the Lord of Majesty, saying, “ If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,” &c. So, whatever opinion a heretic broaches, he adds immediately, “ for it is written;” and adduces, not one, but a thousand testimonies. He prepares a thousand examples from the Law, from the Psalms, from the Apostles, from the Prophets; by which, interpreted in a novel way, he labours to support his doctrine. Thus far this venerable writer.

There is no person, not manifestly perverse or deluded, who cannot see that the Church of God must be, not a house of peace and charity, but an arena of conflicting gladiators, if the authority of those who are appointed to rule it be set aside; or if the deposit of doctrine, which they received, be mutilated, or denied to exist.

Clement of Rome, writing to the disciples at Jerusalem, says: "It is according to this tradition," (he is speaking of the ancient practice and doctrine of the Church,) "we must teach, as people understand diversely what is written;" and he adds, in another place, that he received this maxim from St. Peter.*

St. Dennis, de Eccl. Hier. attests precisely the same truth; Epiphanius says, that tradition is necessary for this purpose; Clement of Alexandria, lib. 7. Strom. says, "that those who interpret the Scripture against the tradition of the Church, lose the rule of truth;" Origen also, Tract. in Math. 29, desires, "that we do not, in disputing about the Scriptures, depart from the original ecclesiastical traditions, nor believe otherwise than we are taught by those who went before us in the Church of God." But why tire you, Sir, with authorities, which are as numerous as the stars of

* This letter of Clement, as well as the other work referred to as his, are not considered genuine by some critics, but their antiquity is admitted by all.

heaven, whereas it is obvious to every person versed at all in antiquity, that the written portion of the law was only a supplement to tradition; and that the meaning of it, wherever it is doubtful or difficult, cannot be ascertained unless by the light of this same tradition.

Where do we look for decisions upon any contested matter of right, or privilege, or title, or possession, but to judges? Why do we employ solicitors and lawyers to plead before them, if the law itself can decide? And why have the judges themselves recourse to the common law, which is traditional, to books of authority, to precedents, unless that neither the statutes themselves, either do or can contemplate all cases, or that even if they did, they could not be justly or wisely administered, unless the light of antiquity, and the wisdom of past times, were shed upon them?

It is little short of insanity in a Christian to deny the authority of the Church; but to admit it, and deny either the existence or necessity of tradition, is an incomprehensible absurdity—the fruit

of gross ignorance, of intolerable presumption, or of the most lamentable fanaticism.

But these societies assert, that the Scriptures are given to all, and that all are capable of understanding them rightly. The first of these propositions is equivocal ; the second is altogether false.

The first is equivocal ; true in this sense, that they are given to the Church, which consists of all true believers, pastors and people, to be expounded, and the sense of such parts of them as are doubtful or hard to be understood, to be explained or decided upon by those who are commissioned by Christ to teach ; whilst the entire, or portions of them, may be read for edification and instruction by all who will not abuse them, or who, in the opinion of those whom the Holy Ghost placed to rule the Church, are likely to profit by them. In this sense they belong to all, and all have a right to them, but all have not a right to decide by them on questions of faith, or to administer the ordinances of religion by them ; no : not so much as

all free subjects have a right to become judges or justices of the peace, or all proprietors of bank stock to become bank directors.

That all are capable of understanding the Scriptures rightly, or that the diversity of opinion about their meaning is a matter of indifference, whether such meaning regards morals or faith, these are errors so gross, and so openly at variance with the history of every Christian state in the world, as well as with that of the Church, and with our own daily experience, that a refutation of them must be tiresome or fulsome to every man of sense. I shall, therefore, pass over this part of the subject, merely hoping that we will have no more Waldenses quoting Scripture to gratify their impure abominations ; no more poor men of Lyons to disgrace human nature ; no more Wickliffites or Hussites to depose all sinful princes and bishops ; no more peasants congregated in Germany to assert, at the expense of all constituted authority, the liberty with which Christ had made them free ; no more conventicles to decree that God is the author of sin, and the predetermined cause of per-

dition ; no more fanatics to levy war against their Sovereign for the sake of righteousness and the Gospel ; no more regicidal parliaments nor protectors ; no more Knoxes to denounce a persecuted queen as Jezabel, or sell the blood of their king for a mess of pottage ; no more revivals, nor crucifixions, nor circumcisions ; I shall hope that all these will cease, and merely detain you whilst I expose a few of the sophisms by which the abettors of the intolerable error which has produced these crimes, seek to sustain it.

They quote the bitter reproach, the severe rebuke of our Lord to the Jews, when he said to them, Jno. ch. v. ver. 39, "Ye search," or, "search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The present race of enthusiasts with one accord quote these words of the Redeemer, as if they conveyed a command, or at least a counsel to all mankind to read the Scriptures without note or comment, and to judge of whatever is therein revealed. Surely there must be a veil over the hearts of these people, as there is over those of the Jews, or

they could not but see, that in the passage now quoted, as well as in the twenty verses which precede it, the Lord of Glory is only intent on proving his own divine mission, and in confounding those Jews, who, through perverseness and obstinacy, opposed the will of God. He appeals to the testimony of his Father given on the banks of the Jordan; he appeals to the testimony of John, who had pointed him out as the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world; he appeals to his own miracles, greater than these, and having referred to the passage in Deut. xviii. ch. where the people prayed, "not to hear the voice of the Lord, nor see again the mighty fire on Horeb, lest they would die;" and where the Lord, in return, told them, "They had spoken well, and that he would raise up a prophet of their own seed, whom they should hear." After Christ, I say, reproaching the Jews for not hearing this prophet, even he himself, who was present, he adds, still continuing his rebuke, "Ye search the Scriptures, in which ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which give testimony of me, and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life."

This is also the voice of the Church to her strayed and obstinate children, whom she seeks to gather under her wings, and they will not. She says to them: “ You have heard the words of the Lord, saying to me, teach all nations, whosoever hears you hears me—the gates of hell shall not prevail against you ; you have heard the Apostles testify of me that I am the pillar and the ground of truth ; you have seen the signs and wonders which I have wrought by my ministers in every age ; you daily confess that I am *One Holy Catholic and Apostolic*, and that you believe in me as you do in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost ; you search the Scriptures which I have given to you, and in which you think you have eternal life, and yet you will not come to me, that ye may have life.” . And yet they are the above-mentioned words of the Lord which the deluded Christians of this time quote against this Church to justify their obstinacy.

The interpretation of this text is the same whether the word “search” or *Ἐρευνᾶτε* be taken with St. Cyril in the indicative mood, which is

the acceptation most agreeable to the scope of our Lord's discourse, as well as with the "οὐτι," or "for," which follows in the context, or whether it be taken, with St. Chrysostom, in the imperative. In this latter acceptation it implies a more bitter rebuke, as if he said, "Whereas not the testimony of my Father, or of John, or of my own works, will convince you that I am he who was promised in Deut. ; go and search the Scriptures, in which you have so much confidence, and there also you will find testimonies of me." How often do we also refer to the Scriptures, with indignation almost, those who obstinately refuse to hear our proofs, that in them, where, like the Jews, they profess to know all things, they may learn to know that which more clearly than all things else is revealed in them, namely, the existence, and authority, and marks of the Church. We desire these persons to search them, to investigate them, to scrutinize, not like the Jews, the letter which kills, but to enter, by humility and prayer, into the spirit of them, that they may come to us, and have life.

Let them learn what Christ wills that his fol-

lowers should do, not from this passage only, but from his answer to the disciples of John, who came to him truly desirous of being instructed in the truth, and whom he treated with the kindness and indulgence of a father; to them he said not, to go and search the Scriptures, but "Go and tell John the blind see, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised to life, and *the kingdom of heaven is preached to the poor, and blessed is he who is not scandalized in me.*" This is the lesson which I would recommend to them carefully to revolve in their minds.

They next object to us a passage from the 17th ch. of the Acts of the Apostles, as if the Jews at Berea, to whom Paul and Silas preached our Lord as the expected Messias, furnished to all posterity, by searching the Scriptures, an example for their imitation.

Of all the mistakes into which the present generation of evangelists have fallen, I know of none greater than this.

Because forsooth a congregation of unconverted Jews, upon hearing the Apostles prove from the law and the prophets, that Jesus was the Christ; because on so hearing these proofs, they went and examined carefully the Scriptures in which they believed, to see whether these strangers quoted and reasoned upon them correctly or not; because they did so, and acted well in doing so, therefore Christians, who have already believed and entered into the Church, are to search these Scriptures, and judge by them on all questions of faith, discipline, and morals, in defiance of the authority of this Church. This is a consequence so unconnected with the premises, so inconsistent with all rules of logic and common sense, as to be unworthy of a scholar, or of any but those unfledged evangelists who propose it.

In the name of wonder, I would ask, what were these people at Berea to do, if they were not to prove the doctrine of the men who came to preach to them a new religion, by the only test in their power, and that a test to which the preachers themselves appealed. They knew not as yet of the existence

of the Church, still less were they members of it—professing to believe in it as they did in God himself. It does not appear that they had seen any miracles performed by Paul or Silas, or that any of the tongues, or prophecies, or signs and wonders, which followed the Apostles, had as yet been exhibited to them ; they had no external motive for believing, unless the reasonableness of the doctrine proposed ; and whether they assented to Paul's doctrine, or still doubted, there was nothing more conformable to the dictates of piety or reason, than to compare, for their greater satisfaction, or the removal of their doubts, what they had heard, with the revelation and prophecies in which they believed, and to which the Apostles referred them.

The Jews in Rome are obliged to attend on certain days at sermons preached for the purpose of showing the truth and divinity of the Christian religion ; and these Jews are constantly referred to their own Scriptures for the justice of the arguments addressed to them ; but does it follow, therefore, that the Romans, who believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, can prefer

their own private interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures to the judgment of this Church? When doubts arise amongst Christians, it is not the example of unbelieving Jews which should be proposed to them, but that of the Christians at Antioch, who, when a dispute occurred amongst them, sent up an embassy to Peter and the other Apostles at Jerusalem, in order to know what seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to them, upon the subject.

A passage from the second letter, 3rd chapter, of St. Paul to Timothy, is also objected to us, where it is written, that "all Scripture, divinely inspired, is useful to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in righteousness," as if there was a Christian in the world who did not admit this truth. I have adduced in my Vindication of the Religious and Civil Principles of the Irish Catholics, a greater number of proofs from the Scripture itself, from popes, and holy fathers of our Church, as well as from the nature of revelation, to confirm this truth, than many of those who impudently propose this objection could easily muster.

What then is the difference between us?—A very wide one indeed: for we maintain that the Scripture is precisely such as St. Paul describes it; useful to the doctor, that he may teach by it; to the pastor, that he may reprove and instruct by it; to all that they may, each in his proper station, be instructed by it unto righteousness. Not all of it to be intrusted to each, but what is useful to every one, that no one may be more wise than he ought, but that he may be wise to sobriety, just as the Spirit, who inspired it, divideth to every one even as he listeth, or according to the measure of the gift of Christ. This is the economy of our Church; whilst those who mistake or abuse the text of the Apostle, give the Scriptures entire without note or comment, to be judged of by all; to the wise, that they may go off in their own inventions; to the ignorant and unsettled, that they may wrest them to their own perdition; to all, that they may be tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive.

If there be, however, one chapter more than another in the Bible which condemns, by anticipation, those preachers and Bible distributors with whom we have to contend, it is the chapter of St. Paul's epistle which I am now treating of, and that which next follows it. In these the Apostle commences by telling his beloved disciple that, "In the last days shall come dangerous times ;" and the present seem to be replete with danger,—"men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, *slanderers*, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasure more than of God ; having an appearance, indeed, of piety, but denying the power thereof ; now this avoid, for of this sort are they who creep into houses, and *lead captives silly women* laden with sins, who are led away with divers desires," (one imagines that he sees a Bible meeting, with the ladies applauding :) but let us hear the Apostle, "always learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth." Now as Jannes and Mambres resisted Moses, so

these also resist the truth—men corrupted in mind, reprobate as to the faith. But they shall proceed no farther; for their folly shall be manifest to all;—it is sufficiently apparent, I think, at present. Here the divine Apostle commences his pathetic exhortation, saying: “But thou hast known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience; what persecutions I endured; and out of all the Lord delivered me. And all who will live piously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; but evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, *erring and driving into error.* **BUT CONTINUE THOU IN THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST LEARNED, AND WHICH HAVE BEEN COMMITTED TO THEE, KNOWING OF WHOM THOU HAST LEARNED.**” Paul seems to allude to that form of sound speech, to that sacred deposit of doctrine, which he had committed to Timothy. Here follows the text which the Bible-men exult in, and which I shall give them at full length: “And because from thy infancy thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which can instruct thee unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus; all Scripture, divinely inspired, is profitable to

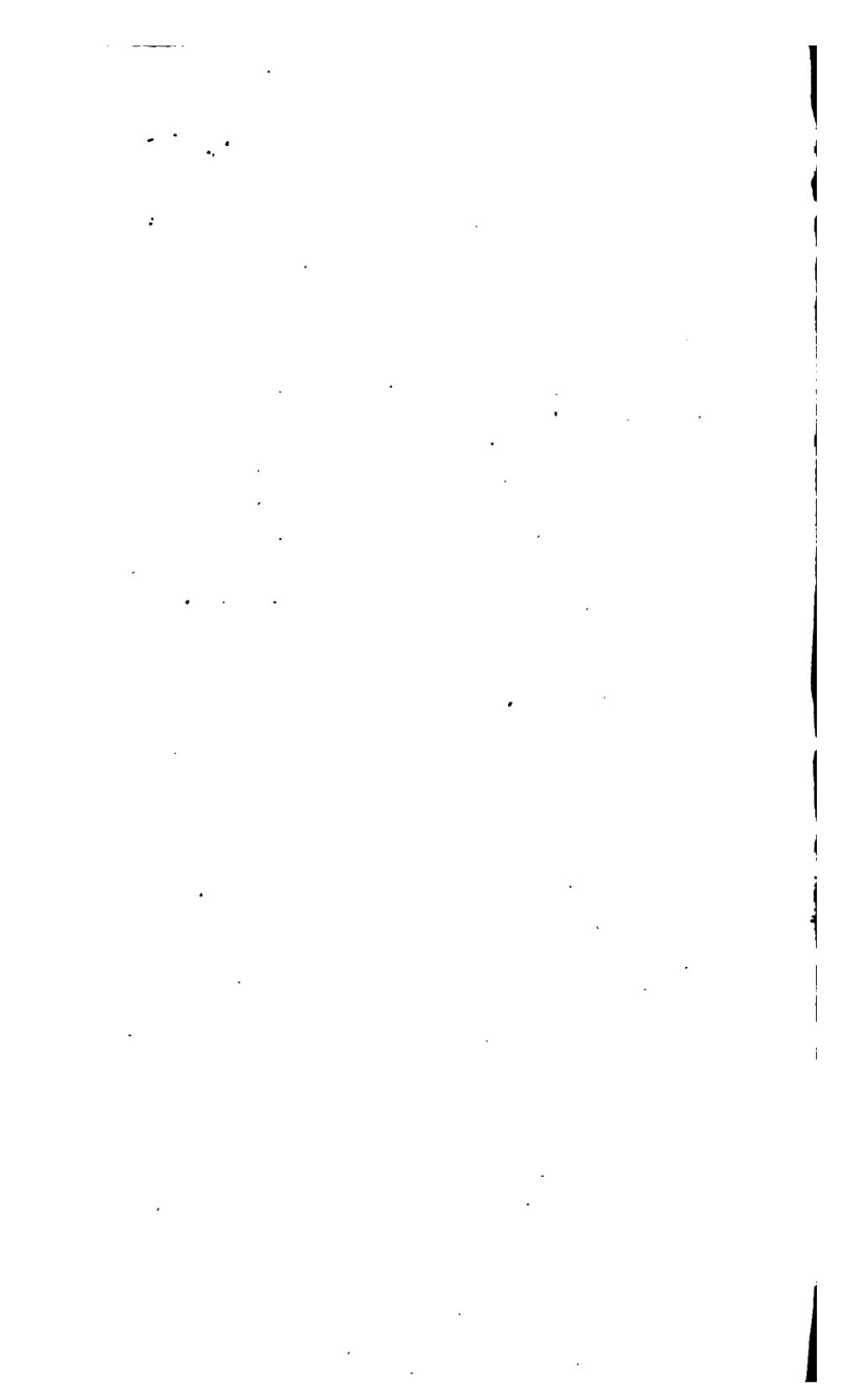
teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice." Here are the purposes detailed for which Timothy, now a bishop, and the metropolitan of Asia, was to use the knowledge he had learned by the perusal of the sacred Scriptures, according to the discipline of the synagogue, which (see the Vindication, p. 56,) was exactly similar to that of the Church, but which knowledge he had acquired chiefly from St. Paul himself, as appears from the preceding verse. The Apostle continues : " I charge thee before God, and Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, by his coming and his kingdom, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, entreat, rebuke with all patience and doctrine ; for there shall be a time when they shall not hear sound doctrine, but according to their own desires they will heap to themselves teachers," (he seems to foresee the system of granting licenses for half-a-crown to preach the Gospel,) "*having itching ears, and will turn away indeed their hearing from the truth, and will be turned to fables.*" The reports, no doubt, of the missionaries, or to something worse, the blasphemous frenzies, perhaps, of Johanna Southcote. So far the Apos-

tle : I shall not add to, or take from his words by any comment of my own, nor detain you further with a refutation of silly objections—objections much more silly than those of Spinoza against the attributes of the Deity, but remain,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient, humble Servant,

J. K. L.



LETTER VIII.

ON CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION, AND ON THE OATH AND
DECLARATION PRESCRIBED BY LAW TO BE TAKEN AND
MADE BY PROTESTANTS.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN Burnett, in 1686, was admitted to the councils of the Prince and Princess of Orange at the Hague, and undertook to assist the revolution, which was then in progress, he fulfilled his engagement chiefly by those writings wherein he represented popery and tyranny as inseparably blended together. From that period till the present, those who are opposed to the Catholics have frequently shifted their attacks, but they have never ceased to employ such men as Burnett, for the purpose of coupling our reli-

gion with something odious, that they might thereby render the people of England hostile to our claims. At one time they represent us as the advocates and supporters of arbitrary power; at another, as the abettors of Paine's principles, hostile to every kingly government. Sometimes they introduce us as the worst description of idolators; and again, as persons who violate our oaths, and keep no faith with heretics. For upwards of a century they held us forth as the adherents of an exiled family; and when that family ceased to exist, they transferred our allegiance from the Stuarts to the popes. Besides these inherent and constitutional faults in the system of popery, they always hang about it shreds and patches, to excite contempt or ridicule. They bring our beads and our incense, our vestments and holy water-pots, our saints and our pilgrimages, our prayers and our crosses, and they place them in such attitudes as that they necessarily create laughter or disgust. By such means as these they feed the passions of the vulgar, and keep alive the prejudices of the best informed. They are so wealthy, and they have such an interest in our depression,

that they do not hesitate to expend large sums annually in keeping such men as Burnett employed, to vilify and defame us; whilst Anniversary Sermons, Bishops' Charges, new editions of Fox's Martyrs, and a cloud of tracts and pamphlets, intercept every effort that we can make to dispel the public illusion.

England, since I have known her by history, has been always governed by a party, and that party always kept the nation hoodwinked. Whether it was a council, or a parliament, or a convention, or Whigs or Tories, who possessed themselves of supreme power, they always contrived to rule by the same principles. They have had many conflicts with each other, but the body of the people have always been their victims or their dupes.

Since the time of Elizabeth the Catholics have dwindled away, and not being able, as a party, to establish themselves in power, they have been uniformly oppressed and persecuted by those who governed, and who enriched themselves at their expense. Did they profess their loyalty, they

were told they were traitors : did they swear to it, they were accused of perjury : did they prove it by works on any emergency, they were laughed at and abused when the danger had passed over.

There is at present a great increase of knowledge in the community, and hence the Catholics are advancing ; just like these principles of commerce and free trade, which were always the same they are now, but which lay buried for centuries under the rubbish of ignorance and prejudice. The party called the Government are impelled by this tide of science, and not being able to stem it, even if they would, they suffer themselves to be wafted on its surface.

It is to this cause that the Catholics will be indebted for their emancipation. When the light of knowledge shall have spread abroad, and dissipated those vulgar errors which now obscure the public mind, Knox, with what is called popery, and the Pretender, will be equally forgotten ; and the reign of tracts and sermons will be succeeded by that of common sense and public interest. It

will be of no consequence whether Whig or Tory preside at the helm of the State; if the former were in power, this change would be accelerated, but the latter will not long be able to retard it.

Whether this period be near at hand, or somewhat remote, I am unable to determine, or almost to conjecture; because the life of nations is so long, that the growth of their children is liable to be delayed for years, or hastened by numberless political events, as sudden often and as unexpected as the changes of the weather.

There are at present no arguments against emancipation which remain unrefuted. There are many false pretences resorted to, in order to screen an opposition to the public interests, which opposition is grounded on causes not to be avowed. As soon as these pretences cease to be plausible, and that the real causes of the opposition are laid bare before the public, the force of truth and justice will prevail. To repeal virtually the Navigation Act, to abolish transit and protecting duties, to dissolve monopolies, and encourage a universal

competition in trade, seemed to be a breaking down of all the safeguards which secured to us a pre-eminence in trade; it was like throwing open our commercial constitution to all the nations of the earth. It has been done, however, and the result is what every wise man anticipated—to wit, improved industry and augmented wealth. Our ships have not been stolen, nor our harbours deserted; our looms, our forges, or our fields, have not been abandoned; we have not ceased to prefer our own country, our own clime, our own language, our own laws, to those which could be found elsewhere; and in throwing open our commerce to strangers, we have only obtained access to the depots of foreign industry, and to the wealth of foreign nations.

So it will happen when every man may worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, without fear, shame, punishment, or reward. Religion, when not restricted, will cease to agitate the public mind; it may fill the heart of those whom God inspires, but it will not be able to engage the passions of a people. When the

temporal causes of excitement are removed ; when the State ceases to be a religious partisan ; when all men who obey the laws can share equally in their protection ; when numberless religionists can start and run in the same course, and contend together for the same prize, without the judge taking any cognizance of their creeds—then there will be no cause of jealousy, and all suspicion of injustice will be removed.

How ridiculous it will one day appear, to have excluded a man from the bench or the bar, because he kissed the pope's toe, or took his opinion on some case of conscience. When men like Henry the eighth, or James the first, were kings, and Bellarmine or St. Thomas of Aquin their books of study ; when the constitution changed with their whims or proclamations, and the laws yielded to their lawless will ; when their speeches from the throne were theological dissertations, and their time employed in framing syllogisms, or cutting surpluses ; when popes presumed to interfere with states, and extended their pretensions to the civil business of men ; when religion and politics were

blended, and all Europe up in arms to decide on school-questions, it might be necessary to inquire what a man believed, or to what religious party he belonged ; but now-a-days to talk of papal power and Protestant constitutions, is like exchanging muskets for the Roman spear, or converting cannons into bows and arrows.

It might be curious to inquire of the princes on the continent, how the pope disposes of temporal affairs within their kingdoms ; how he tampers with the allegiance of their subjects : also, whether the president of the United States is about to go on a pilgrimage to Rome, or whether his fellow-citizens contribute the Peter's pence. All these things should be subjects of grave inquiry to men who dread the pope, and who, to secure their independence of him, not only keep one-half of the king's subjects oppressed, discontented, and conflicting with the other, but who swear to God that they believe this pope has not what one hundred millions of men would swear he has. But a more special notice of this subject is required when treating of Catholic interests.

There is no Protestant holding or administering any office, or entering any learned profession in these countries, who must not, in order to prove his loyalty, declare in the presence of God his belief that "the pope has not, nor ought not to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm." Were such a declaration a mere form of words, it would only be ridiculous; but when the awful name of God is interposed, it becomes terrifying, and is certainly a burthen too heavy for a conscientious man to bear. Were I a Protestant, I would forego the highest dignity in the State rather than make such a declaration. Whether the pope ought or ought not to have spiritual authority within this realm, is a question which depends on that other—whether he be or be not the head of the Catholic Church; for if he be, it is manifest that wherever there are Catholics, he must have jurisdiction over them; and as there are several millions of them within this kingdom, his spiritual authority necessarily extends to them all. But leaving this question, how can a man declare that he has not jurisdiction in this realm,

whereas his having it, and exercising it, is as notorious as the existence of the sun at noon?

In what does power, authority, or jurisdiction consist? In this, simply, that he who possesses them can command some other, and punish him should he disobey. Thus the king, in whom the executive power of the State is lodged, can command his subjects to do whatever the laws prescribe; and his power and jurisdiction over them consists in that right which he has to command, and in the obligation under which they are to obey him. If then there be Catholics within this realm, who recognize in the pope a right to command them to fulfil the laws of God and of the Church, and who profess that they are bound to obey him in these matters, is it not clear, nay manifest, that he has authority and jurisdiction over them? Such authority may not be just, may, or may not, be grounded in divine right, but it is as distinctly recognized in the laws and usages of the Catholic Church, and in the opinions and conduct of Catholics throughout the universe, as the power and authority of our king is ascertained in the laws and

customs of the realm, and in the conduct of his subjects. These laws of our country have force only because they are enacted by persons in whom the entire community recognize a right of legislation ; and the laws of the Church and of the Gospel, on which the papal authority is supposed to rest, are equally recognized as just and valid by every Catholic : I can therefore discover no reason why a man can swear that the pope has not jurisdiction within this realm. **IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF RIGHT, BUT A MATTER OF FACT.** I think a true Protestant might, if there were a just cause, call God to witness that he does not believe that the pope *ought* to have jurisdiction in this country ; but to declare solemnly, before God, his belief that the pope has not such jurisdiction—a jurisdiction constantly exercised by him—requires a degree of indifference about oaths and declarations, which unhappily is but too general; but which certainly should not be encouraged by those in authority : still less should such suspected intercourse with heaven be rendered necessary to enable a man to enter into office, or step inside the portals of the constitution.

I am of opinion that a distinction between a jurisdiction *de jure*, or a rightful jurisdiction, and a jurisdiction *de facto*, does not excuse, still less justify, the above declaration; because such distinction is opposed to the nature of the thing to which it is applied, as well as to all the analogies of our laws and constitution. It is opposed to the nature of the matter to which it is applied, because jurisdiction, or *jus dicere*, properly signifies the power of administering or executing the law. If this power be exercised and submitted to, the jurisdiction exists; and as there is no doubt but the pope does enforce in this country the laws of God and of the Church, and that the Catholics submit to his doing so, it is a plain matter of fact, that whether he ought or ought not to have, he really and in truth has jurisdiction within it.

Again, the distinction is opposed to the analogies of our laws and constitution, for both the one and the other recognize the authority of an usurper possessed of the supreme power, and make it lawful for the subjects of the realm to swear allegiance and pay obedience to him. This was practically

exemplified during the wars of the York and Lancaster families, and also in the time of the Protector and Commonwealth ; so that, supposing the papal power to be an usurpation, we are bound by the above analogy to admit that it may exist. But then, it is said, if you abolish this declaration, you have no security for the allegiance of the subject, because a divided allegiance is imperfect, and equivalent to no allegiance at all ; nay, it may be worse than none—for one allegiance or obligation may be opposed to the other, and a conflict may ensue between the Church and the State.

In the first place, and before replying to this objection, I would plead for the Protestant who disclaims all connexion with the pope, and whilst the Test Act might be left to continue, or some other declaration framed to ascertain the creed of the subject taking office, I would abolish the present declaration, which, viewed impartially, must appear full of difficulties to a sincere Christian, (be he Protestant, or what you please,) and of irreverence to God.

Next, as to the Catholic who professes to obey the pope; I think the extent of his obedience may be easily and clearly ascertained; and if it be found not to conflict or interfere with the duties of a good subject, he should be treated as such, and no farther cognizance taken of his creed. But supposing it cannot be ascertained in what or how far he professes to obey the pope, let it be ascertained in what he does not recognize a foreign jurisdiction: and if it be found that he excludes it from all such thoughts, and words, and actions, of his own, as are at all connected with the State, let him abide in peace, and his religion no more be thought of. Now I should think that the oaths and declarations usually taken by Catholics comprise all these negative and positive marks by which good subjects might be recognized, and afford quite a sufficient guarantee for their allegiance, if they be men to be believed upon their oaths, or who have not belied them by their conduct.

I have premised these remarks to the answer I intended to offer to the proposed objection, in

order to show that even a divided allegiance is not a sufficient ground for depriving a subject of his birth-right, if that part of it which is given to a foreigner do not detract from what is due to the State in which such subject dwells, and to which, by his birth or adoption, he belongs. And to press this view of the matter still more closely, for I take it to be a just view, let us place it upon higher grounds than those which first appear, namely, upon the broad basis of natural liberty or right.

Man, on entering into society, is master of his own mind and conduct; when he attaches himself to a community he does not become its slave, but only a member of it, contracting with it, as it were, and giving to it, or engaging to give to it, a certain portion of his goods and services for the protection and advantages which it can afford him in return. There are two contracting parties, the individual and the society; both are independant, free, and possessed of something valuable, for which, on contracting, each requires a consideration. If this be the case, as is allowed by all who are acquainted with the great principles of law,

why should a member of society be required to give more than is just for that to which he becomes entitled?—why should he be required to give to the other party what *not enricheth him who receives, but makes him who gives it poor indeed?*—why should he be required to surrender those internal thoughts and volitions which are peculiarly his own, by which he holds converse with the Deity, and which have no connexion with those ends and purposes for which society is constituted? Is it not enough that he engages to labour for his country; to give to her a portion of the fruits of his industry; to employ for her his wisdom and his talents; and to shed, if necessary, his blood in her defence? Should she require more, she is unjust, selfish, mercenary; she seeks not to act the part of a just dealer, but of a Jew, who will not lend his money unless at usury, and advances his charge in proportion to the distress of the applicant. There is not, therefore, a *right* in Government to exact of the subject more than a *sufficient pledge* of his allegiance. If our Government has been justified in requiring of its subjects to exhibit certain marks of this or that religion, or to disclaim par-

right!

ticular doctrines or opinions, the right of doing so has not, or cannot have arisen, from the nature of the social compact, but from certain accidental or temporary occurrences. Let these accidents cease, and the right of the Government to enforce such marks or disclaimers, ceases with them. Hence it is, that I cannot sufficiently express my surprise at hearing men say, that our constitution is essentially Protestant : no civil constitution can be essentially either Catholic or Protestant, for we might all become Pagans or Turks, and the constitution remain untouched. Constitution means the fundamental laws of any state ; the fundamental laws of ours are chiefly usages and some old charters, to which, in time, other laws were added. These have subsisted in Catholic and Protestant times ; some of them were in use before we were either Catholics or Protestants : but to say that certain laws made in the seventeenth century are fundamental, so that they can undergo no change, is really unworthy of a wise and learned man. I say so, because the laws made at that period were the effect of sudden changes which occurred in our civil and re-

ligious institutions. These laws wisely embodied and re-enacted many of our ancient rights and privileges, and also made provisions to secure the order of things then existing from those dangers which, on account of circumstances, were most likely to assail it. But there has not been a single reign since the Revolution, in which alterations or infringements on the laws enacted at that period have not occurred. The debt, the standing army, the septennial parliaments, the acts of the last session regarding commerce, are, considering all things, much greater alterations of the constitution as established in 1688, than the admission or exclusion of Catholics to or from Parliament. The truth is, that it would be difficult to determine what are, or are not, the laws and usages which compose our constitution ; but whatever they are, changes, alterations, additions, or improvements connected with them, may be made now as well as heretofore, for *nos etiam homines sumus et sensum habemus*. Our ancestors may have been wise men, but they do not live in our times ; they have not our wants, or interests, or advantages, or relations, and we must, therefore, legislate for ourselves.

But if there be one thing more than another in which the laws of the seventeenth century are not inviolable, it is in what regards their religious character; for the influence of religion upon politics, except *here*, was as different at that period, from what it is at present, as the power of a steam engine is from the labours of a silk-worm. The history also of the passionate enactments against popery, show that they were neither intended nor calculated to be perpetual: that they had their cause in the spirit of party, in the jealousy and dread of an exiled family, and of their connexions abroad and at home, as well as in that bigotry and fanaticism which pervaded Europe. To suppose, therefore, that such laws could form a part of a constitution under which the subjects of these realms were destined always to live, is not rational; it is unbecoming a statesman or philosopher, and shows a mind which, unable to support its opinions by argument, takes refuge in the sacredness of antiquity, and the darkness of remote events. All religions are indifferent to the constitution; it can cherish one and proscribe another, as the good of the community may require; but though

its union with one may, and perhaps should, always continue, it cannot justly punish any religion which is not opposed to the public interests. To say that it does not punish by exclusion, is absurd: when the Government excludes a class of its subjects, it attaches infamy to their name, for it brands them as traitors—at least in affection to the community; as false brethren, as deserters from their own camp. What right has a government to do so?—whence is the authority derived to it of thus defaming its own subjects without clear and unequivocal proof of their treasonable conduct or intent?

In judgment we esteem a man innocent until his guilt is proved; and Demosthenes, as well as the laws of England, maintain, that nature and the jurisprudence of nations entitle a person accused to be heard in his own defence in the presence of his accuser; so that, when a government excludes, and by exclusion punishes most ignorinously its subjects, it seems to me to violate all justice and equity, if it do so without proof of their demerits. But if it do so not only without

proof, and without trial, but after receiving the most unequivocal proofs of innocence—proof by oaths, proof by fire, proof by time and experience, proof by blood, what is its character? I might depict it, but I would rather deprecate its anger than exasperate its injustice.

To say that the State does not punish by exclusion is absurd; not only because exclusion is infamy, but also because it is a positive and substantial loss to the persons excluded, and a positive and direct injustice in the party excluding; it is so, because the Government has no *property* in the administration of public affairs; they are only the trustees of the community, bound in the strictest justice to assess the public burthens, and distribute the public honours and advantages impartially. If, therefore, they impose burthens on a certain class, and withhold from them all distinction and emolument, without a sufficient cause, they are evidently guilty of doing such party a wrong. Will suspicion justify them in acting so? Indubitably not; because the rights of all subjects to such distinctions and emoluments are in-

herent in them as members of the community, and cannot be forfeited unless after proof of their guilt. As well could a man, whose title to his estate is questioned, be ousted from his possession before trial, as a subject, on bare suspicion, be proscribed: constitutions and laws are for the people, the people are not made for them, and no power is given to governments to destroy, but to build up. (Suspicion, in times of danger, entitles a government to suspend the rights of its subjects or of part of them; but when the danger has ceased, or the suspicion has been proved to be unfounded, the suspension of rights should cease also. When, therefore, a government inflicts punishment, and permanently, whether such punishment be disgrace, or forfeiture of honour or profit, on a portion of the people, on mere suspicion, or without proof of guilt, they abuse their trust, and act unjustly; but if they continue to do so after this people have proved their innocence, then their conduct is not only unjust, but tyrannical. They may plead specially against a nation; they may allege imaginary crimes, and deal in false pretences; but if there be a God in heaven, or retribution in another life,

they will there atone for the injuries they will have committed.

But to return to the subject of allegiance. It is objected to the Catholics that theirs is divided. I have endeavoured to show, that even if the allegiance of a subject were divided, yet it would not follow that he should forfeit his political or civil rights, unless such division disabled him from fulfilling the duties of a good subject to his sovereign. This, however, is not the case at all with a Catholic; the objection to his allegiance is founded on an *equivoque*, and has obtained force and currency from a confusion of ideas, as also from the long exercise of temporal authority throughout Christendom by the popes.

Allegiance properly signifies submission and fidelity to a chief. The word *allegiance* is derived from the act of submission made in feudal times by the knight or baron to his superior, when he received from him the investment of his fief or estate. At present it is intended to express our fidelity and attachment to the king, and our submission to the

law; it embraces all our duties as subjects, and he who swears allegiance pledges himself to their fulfilment. This allegiance would be divided if it did not extend to every social duty, if it recognized a second Cæsar, or a second kingdom of this world. But if it do not; if the person swearing allegiance admits of no sovereign but his own; if he have no political or civil connexion with any state but his own; if he discard, as not belonging to him, all laws and institutions of other states, then his allegiance is undivided. He may owe a second kind of allegiance, perfectly distinct from the first; and it is in confounding these two that the equivocation consists, and that duties really and substantially distinct are supposed to be the same. To show that they are two distinct duties, and not one divided, which we owe to the king and to the pope, it is only necessary to reflect, that if the persons to whom fidelity and submission are owing, be distinct, the allegiance paid to each must be also distinct; for allegiance is a *relative term*, and takes its *form*, as the schoolmen say, from the *object* to which it relates: if then civil allegiance relates

to the king, and religious allegiance to the pope; their *forms*, that is what makes them what they are, must also be as distinct from each other as the king is from the pope: hence, the allegiance of the Catholic to his sovereign is one and undivided, as is also that obedience which he owes to the head of the Church.

The next question is, whether the one interferes with the other. In discussing this question, I must beg leave, first of all, to remove some difficulties which might obscure the view which I propose to give of it; these are the historical ~~facts~~ which show to us various conflicts between popes and princes.

From the decline of the Roman empire to the close of the fifteenth century, the popes were mixed up with all the public events which occurred in Europe. The weakness, the credulity, the wants, and interests of princes, contributed on the one hand to throw great power into the hands of him who was reputed the Common Father of the Faithful. The wars, the dissensions, which

occurred unceasingly, rendered it as prudent, as it seemed to be pious, for sovereigns to place their states under the protection of the Holy See. Empires and kingdoms thus became its fiefs; and the court of Rome, which, like every other, knew how to improve its own advantages, advanced the character of its chief from that of Parent, Umpire, or Protector, to that of Lord Paramount, and the Disposer of all earthly Crowns. The study, knowledge, and administration of law, throughout Europe was vested in the Clergy; the pope secured to himself the collation of the best benefices in every State, and by rewarding the Clergy, who had in their hands the administration of the law, in proportion to their attachment to himself, he extended and prolonged his secular dominion. Fierce and numerous were the struggles which occurred from time to time, all tending to break up this system; the contests were prolonged for centuries, but they ended at length in the emancipation of States, and the dissolution of the temporal sovereignty of the pope, except only within his own patrimony. It was during these times that the idea of allegiance being due to the pope in

political or civil matters, was first started ; for the heads of the Church, up to the sixth century, are as uniform in disclaiming it, as some of those who succeeded to Gregory the seventh are earnest in enforcing it. The reason is obvious : until the decline or fall of the Roman empire in the West, the system to which I have here alluded had not come into life, and when it did, and arrived at maturity, civil allegiance became due to the popes by the same title which vested a right to it in other sovereigns. It is not of this that any man of sense and knowledge would now complain ; but what is much to be deplored is, that the popes, in the various struggles which they had to maintain for the preservation of their temporal dominion, however acquired, suffered their flatterers to claim this allegiance for them in virtue of their office as heads of the Church. This claim however, and the doctrine which would uphold it, are, in my opinion, equally opposed to Scripture and tradition ; and all the Catholics of this country have disclaimed it upon their oaths, and have fought, and bled, and died, in proof of their sincerity. There is at present no trace of this temporal

+ power remaining in Europe, unless in the kingdom of Naples, from which a white palfrey is sent annually to Rome, (unless a different arrangement has lately taken place,) to profess that his master holds his kingdom as a fief of the Holy See.

Having thus removed the source of numberless objections to the papal authority as it exists at present, and as we believe it is founded on the Gospel, I can apply myself with more ease to the explication of it, and of its full and entire compatibility with that perfect allegiance which we owe and pay to our sovereign.

The Redeemer has laid down in a few words the principles which regulate our spiritual obedience: "My kingdom," he says, "is not of this world." And, "For this I came into the world; *to give testimony of the truth.*" And again: "Give therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." It is in the kingdom of Christ, which is the Church, that we acknowledge the pope to rule as his vicar or deputy,

and we profess to be faithful and attached to him as children to a father, and submissive to him when he administers or executes the laws of God or of the Church ; but as the power of the State is derived from God, and totally independent of the Church, **WE RECOGNIZE IN THE POPE NO AUTHORITY WHATSOEVER TO INTERFERE WITH IT.** Should he presume to intermeddle with the rights of our prince, or with the allegiance which we owe to him; our answer, so often given, not only in words but in works, would be : “ Your kingdom is not of this world ; he who intrusted the Church to you,” as the great Osias expressed it, “ has committed the State to our Sovereign, and has commanded us to give to him all his rights—our fidelity and obedience, our lives and fortunes ; this is the law of Christ, and we must obey God rather than men.”

The obedience which we pay the Pope is derived from that which we owe to Almighty God ; and as God is the source of all order and harmony, the great Father of princes and of states, our allegiance to him obliges us to be faithful and devoted to our king and to the laws of our country ; HE

commands and teaches us how to perform our civil duties, how to pray, and how to worship ; making obedience to those who rule over us, and the love of our fellow-creatures, the great leading principles of our lives and conduct. So the pope, who is the common father of the faithful, and appointed, as we believe, to enforce the laws of God amongst men, should always act in conformity to him from whom all his power is derived ; and did he fail to do so, and abuse his authority to the violation of what the Lord has ordained, we should pray for his conversion, commiserate his fault, but oppose all his efforts, until he again returned to a sense of duty. But it will be objected, that the pope is the interpreter of the laws of God, and may, therefore, oblige Catholics to acknowledge his right to interfere with secular matters. As well might it be said, that the pope can oblige us to believe that theft is lawful, that perjury is not a crime, that Christ is not present in the blessed Eucharist, or that bishops are not appointed to rule the Church of God. No : all men know what those things are in which he cannot interfere ; in which did he interfere, his

authority would be null, and the exercise of it rejected with scorn. The pope might become impious or criminal, but he could never induce a Catholic to violate the law of God; nor is there, perhaps, any article of this divine law more clearly ascertained, than that subjects owe allegiance in all political and civil matters to their prince; and that the pope, nor any authority on earth, cannot oblige them to violate it.

But it will be said, the pope has often exercised this authority, and was obeyed by Catholics. To which I answer, by referring to what I have above written. No pope ever attempted to interfere with the authority of a sovereign, until Gregory the seventh, in 1080, undertook to depose the emperor Henry the fourth; and then, as he himself, (lib. 7. Epist. 3,) and his great panegyrist Otho of Friesburgh, (lib. 6. Hist. ch. 22 and 25,) complain: "*All the Western Church, with a few only excepted, accused him of excessive harshness and impiety, and looked with the most violent indignation at such a novelty, never before attempted.*" But Gregory, and all of his successors who claimed this de-

structive and hateful power, rested their claim to its exercise chiefly on the temporal right to the empire or other states which had accrued to them by donation or compact, and which they pretended to bestow or take away as fiefs of the Holy See. Boniface the eighth was perhaps the only pope who was led to appeal to his power of the keys alone, in order to justify his proceedings. But I believe the experiments made in the seventeenth century, to array the orthodoxy of subjects against their sovereigns, taught the court of Rome to form a just estimate of their power in this respect, and that they could scarcely devise more efficacious means to tempt Catholics to shake off their just allegiance to the head of the Church, than by calling on them to violate that which God ordained they should pay to their respective sovereigns. The truth is, that popes who would now interfere in such matters would become the laughing-stock of Europe ; and as they have too much wisdom to expose even a rightful power to contempt, how much less would they undertake to assert an obsolete pretension, which no man now living (unless

perhaps some monk who has slept through the two last centuries) would recognise.

The kings throughout Europe had all succeeded in emancipating their states from this yoke previous to the sixteenth century. The empire was more immediately connected with Rome: the pope exercised a great sway not only over the electors, some of whom were ecclesiastics, but even over the emperors, especially in the recognition of the validity of their election, and in conferring on them the imperial crown; but Maximilian, nephew of Charles the fifth, by firmness and address extricated himself from the difficulties to which many of his predecessors had been exposed; and by steadily refusing, as king of the Romans, to promise obedience to the Holy See, took from the popes the last remnant of their claims to the empire as a fief.

The Church is truly the kingdom of Christ on the earth, extending, as David predicted, from sea to sea, and from the river to the extremities of the earth. He who is placed at the head of this vast

community, and who is charged with administering and executing the laws of God amongst those who compose it, has nothing to do with the policy of states. He should not know what forms of civil government prevail in them, or whether the children of Christ live under despotisms or in republics, whether kings or nobles reign over them; and it is most preposterous to see him forget that his charge is not of this world—that he has got souls, not constitutions, to take care of. His duty is to announce to all, that every soul should be subject to the higher powers; that there is no power but from God, and that, therefore, men should be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. He is to announce to the faithful that they are to offer prayers and supplications for all, but especially for kings and those who are placed in authority, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, Greeks or Barbarians, that all may lead a quiet and holy life. He is to tell them to give tribute to whom tribute is due, and honour to whom honour is due; and that he who carries the sword, whether he be a president or a king, a doge or an emperor, a landahman or a grand

duke, is the minister of God, appointed to execute wrath upon him who doeth evil. It is not his business to inquire what dynasty shall reign, what prince shall govern, what constitution the community adopts or rejects. No, these are concerns of which he should know nothing, with which he should never interfere. The kingdom of which he is a sovereign is not of this world. His business is to bear testimony to the truth, to declare and enforce the law of God to the people, to regulate their religious discipline, to dispense to them the mysteries of salvation, and to cast out of the Church those who are obdurate in crime or obstinate in error.

Indeed, whenever popes were disengaged from temporal connexions with states, and observed that line of demarcation which Christ had prescribed to their power, they occupied themselves in these things, and in praying to their heavenly Father, that he would keep those united in his name whom he had given to them to be fed with the bread of life. And whilst wars and revolutions sprung up in the Church, from the malice of the

enemy or the infirmity of man, they were satisfied to prostrate themselves between the porch and the altar, and to pray, saying, "Spare, O Lord, spare thy people, and give not thy inheritance to reproach." They did not then interpose to define rights which, perhaps, could not be determined, or which, if determined, would not be respected or obeyed. Always hating tyranny as a crime, always detesting rebellion as fraught with misery and guilt, they never ceased to exhort and to beseech that peace, which surpasseth all understanding, might be preserved. They told the children of Christ it was their duty rather to suffer injuries than inflict them, and that those were blessed who suffered persecution for justice sake. But if men armed to defend their rights, or sovereigns waged war to avenge injuries or make conquests, these popes prayed and mediated, but they did not pre-judge what was not decided. The common father of the faithful knew of no party in the contest; he contemplated all as children conflicting about some disputed inheritance, and dispensed to them such graces of religion as they were competent, during their struggle, to receive.

Thus we find, whilst the Roman emperors were pagans, the popes desired obedience to be paid to him who ruled. They did not inquire into the titles by which they held the empire, whether they received it from the senate, from the people, or from the prætorian bands.

So, when the cross was elevated on the summit of the Capitol, they were obedient to the emperor, to the Goth, or to the Vandal, indifferently, according as providence happened to subject Rome to their sway. They knew of no divine right in kings, unless that which entitled him whom power, or compact, or accident, placed in authority, to rule over those who were his subjects; still less did they interfere with those nations, who, like suckers growing up from the withered trunk of the empire, elected princes or senates to rule over them, according to such laws and usages as it pleased them to adopt.

The popes saw that nations will not always continue at rest; they lamented the instability of human things, and the evils which attend almost

every innovation ; but experience also taught them, that in human affairs changes and improvements are often united ; they submitted patiently to ills which they could not prevent, always hoping that he who makes all things work together for the good of his elect, would preserve his own kingdom unhurt amidst all the vicissitudes to which this world might be exposed.

They saw that even amongst that people for whom the Almighty wrote a political, religious, and civil code, that at one time a commonwealth, at another a monarchy, had prevailed. They saw the same Almighty hand deliver the Jews as captives to Assyria, and raise up Judas, the Machabee, to chastise the pagan, and re-establish the independence of his country. These precedents taught the vicegerents of Christ to keep aloof from the bustle and contentions of men ; to watch over their spiritual concerns, suffering them, as the Almighty did, to be impelled by their malice, their infirmity, or their wisdom, whether into wars or revolutions, which in the working of human events must necessarily arise. Thus, not only in those

remote times do we find the heads of the Church keep themselves disengaged from the temporal affairs of sovereigns and subjects, leaving them to adjust or to exercise such rights as they might possess from nature or from compact, but we also have before us many examples of the same wise procedure exhibited by them in later times.

When the Capets usurped, as some would say, or took possession of the throne of Charlemagne, and placed in a monastery the last remnant of the Carlovingian race, the popes were silent, and Religion continued undisturbed to discharge her sacred functions. When Genoa revolted under Doria, and when numberless other states in Italy changed their constitutions or their sovereigns, the father of the faithful deplored the crimes which were committed, and mingled his tears with the blood of his children ; but he interposed only by his advice ; he deposed no prince, he excommunicated no people.

When the power of Spain enforced a defective title to the throne, which the untimely death of

King Sebastian, and the sterility of a holy churchman had left without an heir, the popes looked silently at the unrighteous occupation. But when a just and glorious revolution placed the house of Braganza on the throne of Portugal, Rome, which was induced to countenance the expelled monarch, withdrew its opposition to the rightful sovereign, and consoled the heart of that most faithful country, by giving to its pastors that canonical institution which for some time had been withheld. In that same country Alphonso Henriques, under the immediate auspices of heaven, had long before defeated and expelled the Moors ; those Moors whom the Goths were then driving also from Spain. These wars were holy ; but whether infidels and Christians contended, or whether Christians struggled with Christians, Religion sought only to comfort the distressed, and console the afflicted, whilst her chief pastor retained the character, and fulfilled the office, of the common father of the faithful. With the revolution of England the popes had no concern ; the nation which expelled the Stuarts only enforced its just and lawful rights ; and had the British people, or the royal house of

Hanover, been Catholics, they would have experienced no molestation for defending their liberties and preserving their constitution. The popes would have deplored the excesses which occurred, but would not undertake to protect a despot in the unjust exercise of power, or condemn a nation for struggling to preserve its birth-right.) In the wars which occurred in Ireland there is nothing but anomalies ; they can no more be reduced to any rule or principle, than the wanderings of an Arab ; they cannot serve to illustrate any position—I wish they were buried in an eternal oblivion. But to show that the popes do not at present attempt to exercise any temporal power in political affairs, and that Religion in their hands is not made any longer the hand-maid of policy, we are only to refer to the present contest in South America.—There whole nations have rebelled against their sovereign ; and in his conduct towards them, the pope has manifested to all the earth that his kingdom is not of this world. He sees in these regions a vast portion of his family struggling to become independent of their lawful king. He must lament; nay deplore, all the evils which have occurred,

and which still continue to afflict that portion of the Church ; but, like the good Samaritan, he is only employed in pouring wine and oil into the wounds of his children, dispensing to them all the blessings which they can receive, whilst he leaves heaven, to which they have appealed, to decide the justice or injustice of their contest.

I have been, perhaps, tedious with these observations, but I thought it useful not only to define the allegiance due by Catholics to the head of the Church, but also to illustrate, by examples, as well as arguments, the nature of that papal authority which is such a bar to our emancipation. At the commencement of this letter I only intended to animadvert on the declaration against the existence of the papal authority within this realm, which is required of Protestants ; and I was led insensibly, perhaps necessarily, to a lengthened discussion on the nature and extent of that authority itself. I trust it will appear, from what I have written, that this authority does not conflict or interfere with that of our gracious sovereign ; nay, that in its exercise it would tend to

confirm it ; (as also, that the obedience which we owe to the pope regards only the observance of those duties which every Christian is bound to fulfil.) But what is, perhaps, of most importance, if I have shown it, is, that the papal authority, as it is founded on the Gospel, as it exists at present, as it has been exercised when it was unconnected with special compacts, abuses, or usurpations, leaves every human being undisturbed in the exercise of his political rights, and is truly paternal to both subjects and sovereigns, being equally solicitous for the welfare of all. Our religion will produce no Sacheverels to upbraid a nation which asserts its rights ; no Bissets to stimulate to opposition ; or Burnetts to foment rebellion, or conspire against the throne.

I shall conclude this letter, which has already grown too long ; and in my next, after a few reflections on the remaining part of the Declaration, conclude the subject of Catholic Emancipation ; and have the honour to remain,

Dear Sir, &c. &c.

J. K. L.

P. S.—The only matters which occur to me in which the authority of the pope comes even indirectly in contact with the civil duties of the Catholics within this realm, are cases of marriage, where the canons of the Church which the pope administers, have created impediments not recognized by our laws. But besides that this matter could be easily arranged by a concordat, this same difference between the laws of the Church and those of the State, not only exists here at present, but also exists in France and in other countries on the continent, without producing any notable inconvenience; for this very obvious reason, that the ecclesiastical law affects the spiritual interests of the parties, whilst their temporal concerns are regulated by the laws of their country.

LETTER IX.

THE SUBJECTS OF THE FOREGOING LETTER CONTINUED.

DEAR SIR,

THE Oath and Declaration taken by Protestants proceed to set forth, that "there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, at or after the time of consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary, or any other saint, and the sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous."

This portion of the Oath and Declaration, though not partaking of any political character, and introduced chiefly through religious spleen, is more painful to a man of upright conscience than even the former part; and to read it merely is sufficient to show how well it is calculated to suppress peace, and foment ill-will between members of the same community.

I shall say nothing of what our Church teaches on the subject of transubstantiation, having discussed it in my "Defence of the Vindication of the Irish Catholics;" but I am bold to say, that no man who reads *Doctor Parker's* (the Bishop of Oxford) "Reasons for abrogating the Test," will swear or declare to God, without pain, "that he believes there is not any transubstantiation of the bread and wine, at or after the time of consecration." But admitting that there is not, how can an appeal to heaven on such a subject be justified? Whereas, we should not only suppose, but *know*, (and knowledge, according to Locke, implies certainty,) that what we swear is conformable to the truth.

I have heard that when my Lord Grey, and I believe General Thornton, brought forward this subject in the houses of parliament to which they respectively belong, it was observed by many members that the Declaration was exceedingly objectionable, but that it was taken with a certain intention, or in a sense different from that conveyed by the words which compose it; but besides that, mental reservations and equivocations are not only unworthy of gentlemen and Christians, but expressly excluded in the Declaration itself, I cannot conceive why a form of words, impious perhaps in their tenor, dubious in their sense, useless or unnecessary as a test of religious faith, but above all, provokingly offensive, and even insulting, not only to the Catholics of the empire, but to the whole Catholic world, should, through indolence or bigotry, be let to remain on the statute-book. Lord Eldon or the Bishop of Canterbury may be able to account for it, but to a person unacquainted with state secrets, or feeling a reverence for the awful name of God, or being attached to the simplicity of truth, it is, indeed, inexplicable.

The invocation of the Saints and the sacrifice of the Mass superstitious and idolatrous ! This is repeated annually by every corporation officer throughout the kingdom ; and not only by those, but every bishop, every judge, every sheriff, every clergyman, every lawyer, every attorney, every man going into parliament, holding office under the crown, or entering upon almost any legal profession, if he be of the Established Church, must declare on oath his belief, that the invocation of the Saints and the sacrifice of the Mass are superstitious and idolatrous !! The husband of the Catholic wife, the parent of the Catholic child, if a Protestant of the Established Church, must do this, or sacrifice his family, perhaps and fortune, as well as his honours. The public officer who invites his Catholic friend to dine, or who, in his turn, sits at the board of his heterodox neighbour, must prepare for this social intercourse by proving on oath his belief, that his host, his guest, his neighbour, his friend, is an idolator. And the magistrate who sits on the bench, the judge who dispenses justice, must not, cannot take their seats until they will have sworn that it is their belief that their suitors, that

[†] See Dr. Lingard's notes on the oaths taken by the Queen.

all the Catholics who expect justice in mercy at their hands, are idolators. If this obligation were imposed on corporators or tithe collectors, it would be quite in character, as their whole life is employed in opposition to the public good, and it might be necessary to steel their hearts by such a declaration against the victims of their oppression; but to impose such a burthen upon liberal, enlightened, and honest men, is quite intolerable!

To declare the sacrifice of the Mass to be idolatry, is really absurd, because idolatry is the worship of a creature as God, and at Mass no Catholic ever worshipped any thing but God; the thought of worshipping the appearance of bread in the consecrated host, never enters their mind; their homage is exclusively directed to Christ.

If he be not present, we may be guilty of a mistake or of an error, but unquestionably we are not guilty of adoring what we see or touch, which alone would be idolatry. We believe that Christ, though present, is veiled from our eyes, and it is HIM alone we adore, to HIM only do we pay

our homage, and not to any creature in heaven or upon the earth.

Supposing a layman, an impostor, to personify a priest, and attempt to celebrate Mass, would any person consider those who attended and worshipped at the supposed sacrifice to be idolators?— No: I suppose such a transubstantiation of them, without their knowledge or consent, could not be effected even by the framers of the Declaration; they would be dupes, but not idolators; and if their error in this case would exempt them from the horrible crime of giving supreme honour to any thing less than God, would not a similar error, supposing it to exist, excuse them also should Christ not be present when a priest consecrates?

The case is the same with regard to the invocation, or as it is called, the adoration of the Virgin and of the Saints; and it may be curious to show that the belief of the Catholic on this subject, which the Protestant swears to be idolatrous, is, like that on many other subjects equally reviled, substantially the same as his own.

Catholics and Protestants believe " in the communion of saints ;" it being an article of our common creed. The latter will have such a communion to be a charitable intercourse, or communion between the members of the Church both in heaven and upon the earth ; but yet swears that he believes it to be superstitious and idolatrous for those Christians who are here below, to show respect or pray to those of their brethren who are in heaven ; this is the belief of the Protestant, whilst the Catholics think it a lawful and pious practice to do so. Behold then the state of the question. All are agreed that the members of the Church on earth and in heaven are united by charity, or the love of each other. They also agree that this charity is an active principle, always operating or desiring to do all the good in its power to the object of its affection, even to be united with it in one, as Christ and his Father are one.

It is also agreed that these members of the Church who are in heaven see God face to face, even as he is ; that they possess him, and dwell in him ; that they adore him, and sing Hosannahs to

his name ; but they cannot, says the Protestant, pray to him for their absent brethren. Why not, asks the Catholic ? Were not prayers and supplications for their brethren part of their occupation whilst in this world ? you allow that they still love those whom they loved then, (for in this you say the communion of saints mentioned in the creed consists,) and would of course assist them if they could ; and what is the reason they cannot now pray for them as they did whilst on earth ? Are they too busy, is their charity extinguished, or has it relaxed into indifference, as it generally does in this world with persons admitted to the courts of kings ?

Well but, rejoins the Protestant, it would, and I even swore to God that I believe it would, be idolatrous to pray to them. Ah, an oath, replies the Catholic, is a serious thing ; but, however, your having taken one does not make it idolatry to pray to the saints. It would be idolatry to give them the supreme honour due to God alone, but it is not idolatry to respect them more than it would be to respect a judge, or a member of parliament, on

account of his rank : but we are not speaking of idolatry, but only of the lawfulness of asking the saints in heaven to pray for us ; and if it be admitted by us both, that it is an ordinary occupation of theirs, not only to bless and praise God, but also to feel and manifest a charitable interest ~~for~~ their brethren on earth, in begging favours ~~for~~ them from the Father of mercies, from whom every good gift descends, why should it be unlawful to ask them to do what they must do constantly, unless their charity be extinguished, and the communion of saints dissolved by their removal to heaven ;—a supposition which you or I will not admit. Ah, but says the Protestant, how can they ~~hear~~ you ?

It is probable they can, as otherwise how would there be joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner ? and very easily too, replies the Catholic ; for as they dwell in God, not as we do, but much more intimately, seeing him face to face, and knowing him even as he is ; and as we also live, and move, and have our being in him, it is extremely probable, if not certain, that to

perfect their happiness, he enables them to hear, and see, and know, and in a more perfect manner than we can conceive, whatever regards those for whom they feel such an interest as perfect charity inspires. But supposing that they were not rendered happy by such an indulgence, and such perfection of their faculties, do you suppose they forget their old belief and practices whilst on earth, when here they invoked the saints? And is it not likely, as they know of such a practice to exist still, that they join their supplications to God with those of their brethren, who commend themselves to their prayers, which amongst us is a form of supplication constantly used in praying for our friends. The practice of praying to them, on this ground alone, even if the other arguments were not so forcible as they are, I would consider pious and salutary; but what renders it more so is, that we never pray to them without also praying to God, as all our petitions to the saints are concluded—"Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, &c." If then it be pious and salutary to pray to God, whatever may induce us to come into his presence, to address ourselves to him through his

only Son, must be useful and commendable; and that the custom of praying to the saints has this effect with us, cannot be doubted.

Ah, but then, says the Protestant, you thus make many mediators, whereas there is but ONE between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

On that subject, observes the Catholic in reply, we are most perfectly agreed; we pronounce anathema against any one who proposes or admits a second, as you may see in the council of Trent, 25th Session.

The mediation of Christ consists in his having redeemed us from sin and death; not with the corruptible things of gold and silver, but with his own most precious blood, and appearing covered with it before the face of God for us, where he always lives to make intercession for us. But when by this redemption, and this intercession, he has assembled about him in heaven millions of his redeemed, do you suppose us to imagine that they will rebel against him like Lucifer, push

him from his throne of glory, and present themselves in his place ? We, Catholics, have very different ideas of what we suppose to occur in heaven : we believe Christ stands before the face of God for us, the only mediator between him and men ; but we are quite convinced that he is rejoiced when he finds himself surrounded with angels and saints offering the incense of prayer at the altar where he himself, the Lamb that was slain and yet liveth, is adored by all the hosts of heaven. These saints are his body—he is their head ; they cry out that he alone is worthy to receive glory, and honour, and benediction, and divinity, and riches ; they offer their petitions through him to the Father. He is their mediator as well as ours ; and when we pray to them, we well know the place they hold, and that it is through Christ alone they can assist us. You may call them mediators if you will, but they mediate not like Christ, but through him. Call them intercessors if you will, but they intercede only through Christ. They have nothing now more than when they prayed on earth, except through him ; he is the only mediator, properly

so called, between God and men. Your belief on this subject is substantially the same as ours ; your practice should be the same as ours ; your language is precisely the same as ours ; hear it from the tongue of one of your most learned bishops. Montague, Antid. p. 20, says : "I do not deny but the saints are mediators, as they are called, of prayer and intercession ; they interpose with God by their supplications, and mediate by their prayers." And in his Treatise on the Invocation of Saints, p. 97 : "I see no absurdity in nature, no incongruity unto analogy of faith, no repugnancy at all to sacred Scripture, much less impiety, for any man to say, 'Holy angel guardian, pray for me.'" And in p. 118. : "It is no impiety to say, 'Holy Mary, pray for me ; holy Peter, pray for me.'" And yet this is the doctrine which every Protestant gentleman of the Established Church is obliged, on taking any office, to declare before God to be, in his belief, superstitious and idolatrous ! I have only to add on this subject, that I think the Protestants are in as much need of emancipation as the Catholics themselves.

These reflections on the Oath and Declaration have been, perhaps, too much prolonged; but they are not only obstacles to emancipation, but they are injurious to true religion, as well as disgraceful to the nation; and I thought, on that account, it was just to animadvert upon them at some length.

In discussing, Sir, the Catholic question, the principal difficulty one feels is, how to get hold of it; it is so large and so important, that few can handle it well; and should a person not do so, it suffers more or less at having been touched by him.

I think it is Epaminondas, the Theban, who said, that every subject has a handle, and if that be taken hold of, the subject can be well managed; if not, it escapes from the hand. But how can the cause of a nation—of a whole people, not a particular interest, but their entire political condition, or rather existence—how can this be taken hold of, or treated of in a letter? It would be quite impossible; and, therefore, my remarks will ap-

pertain to certain appearances rather than to the question itself.

The justice of the Catholic claims, viewed abstractedly, is clear. To discuss it is like writing a treatise to prove that there exists a supreme Being. The advantages which these claims being conceded would bring to Ireland at large, are in like manner not less obvious than the frightful evils which result, and will continue to result, from their being withheld. Make the laws equal, and administer them justly, and there is not a nation on the face of the earth will seek more temperately, nor await more patiently, the redress of other grievances, and the natural progress of improvement. The minister who says we may better take our stand here, whilst Ireland is divided and weak, than make the laws equal, and unite her population in seeking from us what should not, or could not, be granted ; such a statesman is narrow-minded, a purely political bigot ; he is not fit to rule in these times. A wise minister, such a man as Chatham, would say, the resources of Ireland are great ; her people and her produc-

tions entitle her to be great and happy; it shall be my care to remove every obstacle to her improvement, and instead of repressing her energies until their workings overwhelm me, I will guide and direct them to the increase of her prosperity and of my own fame.

In fact, all the obstacles to the settlement of Ireland, of which settlement Catholic emancipation must be the basis, arise from partial interests, or from contracted views of state policy. Nor should this be a matter of surprise. When Flood, and along with him, and above him, Grattan, unfolded to Ireland her rights, published her interests, and led her to independence, there was scarcely a man in the country, except perhaps a few dozens, who did not startle at the idea of innovation; they could not see through the light, which, like a flood, was let in upon them: but by degrees they become accustomed to it, their power of vision was gradually strengthened, and their judgment by degrees regulated. So it is in our days, one man cries out, "What will become of the Church!" Another, "The Protestant interest will be ruined!"

A third exclaims, "They will become Reformers, or extort a repeal of the Union!" These are the unfounded alarms which leave the Catholics enslaved, the country miserable, and her children in a state of moral warfare.

What will become of the Church? Why what matter what becomes of the Church; let her fare like every other institution; let her stand or fall by her own merits. If her establishment be useful to the country, let it continue and flourish; if not, let it go in the way of all flesh; Religion does not depend on an Establishment, and if she be pruned of her excrescences, she will only be the more useful. But why put her in the scale against the interests of a nation? **THERE IS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL IN IRELAND WHO WOULD TAKE FROM HER AN ACRE OF LAND, OR A FLEECE OF WOOL, TO BESTOW IT UPON ANY OTHER CHURCH;** and if she were deprived to-morrow of a moiety of her wealth, she would be vastly more useful than she is at present. Catholic emancipation has no more connexion with the downfal of the Church, than any one other measure of justice which may

be devised for the benefit of this country. The name of a Church has something sacred in it ; it is also connected with many prejudices, and on that account it is put forward against the Catholics as a sort of outwork to defend the citadel of corruption against those regular approaches of truth and justice which are making against it from every quarter.

The Irish will become Reformers. Aye, to a certainty they will if you continue to treat them unjustly, and Reformers of the very worst description ; they will ally themselves with any enemy that political corruption may have. The man who is in pursuit of a robber, and seeking to recover his goods, does not inquire of the person who joins him in the pursuit, whence he came, or what his character or object is ; he wants his assistance to seize the culprit ; and without thinking whether he may not also be a robber, and of the worst description, he takes him as an ally. Just so the Irish. Reject them, insult them, continue to deprive them of hope, and they will league with Beelzebub against you. Revenge is sweet, and

the pride of a nation is like the vanity of a woman, when wounded, it is relentless. They will repeal the Union. Yes, undoubtedly. The present generation will not pass, if you continue the old system, until you will find the cry for emancipation turned into a clamorous demand for that very measure. Irishmen before united in seeking to make this country independent ; the embassy to the French Directory consisted not of Catholics but of Irishmen. They may unite again. The mighty body of Catholics, growing as it is in size and strength, will, like all large bodies, attract smaller ones to it; the fury of fanaticism may subside, and you will be amazed in a few years at the coalition of interests in Ireland. If this power which exists at present, and which will go on increasing, be left conflicting with the power of the State, it will compel you to kiss the feet of France, or wage against her the most dangerous war in which England has ever been engaged. You may rely upon it, Sir, that whether the conflict will be called a conflict for Emancipation, or for Reform, or for a repeal of the Union, the conflict will continue, unless you begin and follow up the

work of redress ; and of this it is folly not to see that a case which interests the pride, and property, and honour, of six-sevenths of the people, must be disposed of before any other can well be discussed.

Could you by any power create a happy valley, like that to which Rasselas was introduced, in every parish in Ireland, and place all the inhabitants within it, yet if you left the penal laws on the statute book, though not in operation, you would not remove the discontent and heart-burnings from Ireland. There are thousands of people in this country who scarcely know the nature of any law, whether favourable or penal ; but you will not find an old woman or a ragged child who has not imbibed from the breast, or is not taking into the grave, the hatred and horror of the system by which you govern the Irish Catholics. They know not what the system is, but they think it is a something horribly, ineffably unjust, and wicked. This is the case : that it is so there is not perhaps in Ireland a man better enabled to know than the person who addresses you ; he as-

sures you of it solemnly, and in the face of the country, without fear of contradiction: and it being so, is it not an infatuation to seek to govern a people so affected without removing the cause of so much alienation and hatred—a cause upon which any man can breathe and blow into a flame as easily as he could cause a train of powder to explode?

How often have I perceived in a congregation of some thousand persons, how the very mention from my own tongue of the penal code caused every eye to glisten, and every ear to stand erect; the trumpet of the last judgment, if sounded, would not produce a more perfect stillness in any assemblage of Irish peasantry, than a strong allusion to the wrongs we suffer. And there are men who think that this country can be improved whilst such a temper continues, or that this temper will cease whilst emancipation is withheld.— Vain and silly thought! Men who reason so know nothing of human nature; or if they do, they know nothing of the nature of Irishmen.

But then if you change the system, you begin to make concessions, and where can you stop ? I answer, you may stop as you stop in England, when you have satisfied the enlightened portion of the community ; when you have satisfied the good sense of the country ; when you have done what the public interest requires ; you may stop then, and not before. You cannot stop whilst you leave six millions of men clamorous for clear and fundamental rights ; rights founded on the law of nature—on the law of the Gospel—on positive treaty ; you cannot stop whilst intestine wars are suppressed by military force alone ; you cannot stop whilst the Insurrection Act is the common law of the country ; you cannot stop whilst millions are in an habitual state of famine and nakedness, whilst property, on that account, is insecure, and whilst capital and industry can find no resting-place ; you cannot stop whilst a quarter of a million of men are the lords and masters of seven millions, and the exclusive possessors of honours and emoluments ; you cannot stop until the absurd, and preposterous, and unjust system prevails, of compelling one class of religionists to

bear almost exclusively the immense burthen of two Churches ; you cannot stop whilst these things remain undone : but only begin with sincerity the work of reformation, and if a demagogue or agitator interrupt you, however slowly you proceed, there is not a nation on the earth will be so quick or zealous in coming to the support of its Government, as Ireland will be in giving her best assistance to your endeavours.

We are by nature attached to kings. Bridges, steam, commerce, the union, the parliament, the wealth and luxury of London, our want of shipping, and of foreign commerce, our internal trade, and constantly increasing intercourse with England, our common language, when these will be brought into fair and full play, and the affections of the Irish conciliated, it would be impossible to raise here an anti-Anglican faction. On the contrary, when England would be agitated, the Government could repose with security on Ireland. In monarchies of a limited extent, the remote provinces are always, if well administered, the most steady in their allegiance ; because distant from the court

and its intrigues, from the capital and its luxuries and cabals, they are solely intent on their own affairs, and look to men in power with infinitely greater reverence than those do who approach near to them. If the Irish be not compelled to hate and fear you, they will obey and love you with an implicit fidelity and attachment. " You have, therefore," as Moses said to the Israelites, " water and fire before you, and to which you please you may stretch your hand." If you continue to oppress Ireland and insult her people, she may, like Sampson, though she were to be herself immolated, pull down the pillars of the constitution, if it were only that she might destroy in their ruin her implacable enemies ; but if you change the mode of government, you will render her strong, powerful, and attached ; you will moreover act justly, and fulfil your obligations to **HIM** who will weigh nations, likewise individuals, in the scales of the sanctuary, and torment with all his might those who have abused the power which had been intrusted to them from above. I could only touch the subject of emancipation ; it is too big for me to handle, or if it be not, I

should write a book to do it justice. My chief anxiety for emancipation, after a sense of duty to my king, and attachment to my country, arises from my aversion—from my horror of civil war.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir, &c. &c.

J. K. L.

P. S.—You mentioned in your Letter something of a provision for the Catholic Clergy. I think all mention of that subject should be deferred until the penal laws are abolished, as I hope you would not find even one individual of our entire body who would accede to any arrangement made for such a purpose whilst a single restrictive statute remains unrepealed. No: the attachment of the laity to us would be badly requited did the ministers of that religion on account of which these laymen suffer, cease to share in the common lot, or not even appear foremost amongst the persecuted. But if Catholics were

emancipated a provision could be made for the Catholic Clergy unconnected with, and totally independent of court favour, and which would not add probably a single shilling to the burthens of the country.

LETTER X.

ON THE DISFRANCHISEMENT OF THE FORTY SHILLING FREEHOLDERS.

DEAR SIR,

THIS subject has been so frequently mentioned, the evils arising from the subdivision of lands so closely connected with it are now so familiar, and almost so fashionable a topic, and the prevailing system of looking superficially at every political question is so much in vogue, that I would not be surprised if it were proposed to reduce again the peasantry of Ireland to the condition of serfs ; that is, of serfs without hope of manumission, for serfs they are at present ; but every man who does not despair of Ireland expects

to see them one day converted into freemen. There are other reasons why this measure might be dreaded ; the influence of the Catholics in returning members to parliament from the southern and western counties and cities ; the successful struggle made by them on different occasions in the County Wexford and Queen's County, and more recently in Sligo and Dublin ; these things have excited all the bile of the Orangemen, who, not presuming to speak in parliament of the re-enactment of the penal code, would wish to introduce it covertly, by taking from the Catholic peasant even the semblance of political power, and depriving him of his chief claim to the protection and favour of his landlord. So strong is this feeling amongst the orange party, that I doubt not the aristocracy which is connected with them would sacrifice the last remnant of their rank and power, which consists in the number of their free-holders, to the base passion of wreaking vengeance on the Catholic name. But there is a still stronger reason for being filled with apprehensions on this subject, and it arises from the English aristocracy, and their powerful agent in

the House of Commons being opposed to the extension of the elective franchise in England, as to some agrarian law ; such a feeling necessarily obliges them to look with displeasure and apprehension to the extent of this right in Ireland, lest its existence here might act as an incentive upon the English people in seeking a similar right for themselves. They would, therefore, without avowing the true motives of their conduct, gladly avail themselves of the outcry raised against forty shilling freeholders in Ireland, in order to abolish what in their opinion is a great encroachment on their own hereditary rights. But if there be one measure more than another calculated to seal the doom of Ireland, to eradicate from her soil the very seeds of freedom, and to insure for ever her degradation, that measure is, in my opinion, the disfranchisement of the forty shilling freeholders !

It is the natural right of man—a right interwoven with the essence of our constitution, and producing, as its necessary effect, the House of Commons, that a man who has life, liberty, and property, should have some share or influence in

the disposal of them by law. Take the elective franchise from the Irish peasant, and you not only strip him of the present reality, or appearance of this right, but you disable him and his posterity ever to acquire it. He is now poor and oppressed, you then make him vile and contemptible ; he is now the image of a freeman, he will be then the very essence of a slave ; he has now a hope that, should his country improve, he may one day raise his voice on the hustings, and plead the cause of all who belong to his class in life, whilst he proclaims the virtue of the candidate whom he supports, or upbraids the recreant who betrays the public trust: but take from him his freehold, and you cast him out of the constitution. Like the Helot at Athens he may go to the forum and gaze at the election, and then return to hew his wood or fetch his water to the freeman ; an inhabitant, but not a citizen, of the country which gave him birth.

Why do we decry, and so justly, those despotic governments which depress the energies, debase the faculties, and break down the health and vigour

of the human race? Why do we preach up to kings and states the justice and necessity of giving constitutions to their subjects? What do we mean by the lectures we read them, if it be not to admit those who constitute the community, and bear the burthens of the State, to have some actual or virtual share in the making and administering of the laws under which they are to live? Are they absolute monarchies we wish them to establish? No: these are blessings which they already enjoy. Are they republics we recommend them to adopt? Ah, no: we wish these to flourish only beyond the Atlantic. Do we submit to them whether an aristocracy or an oligarchy be not desirable? Of these we are so enamoured, that I believe we would not be disposed to infringe on such nations as enjoy a monopoly of this species of government. What is it then that we so forcibly and frequently recommend? We want these foreign governments to admit some little tincture of democracy, to let in on the inert pool of wealth and the indolence of hereditary wisdom even a little acid extracted from the people. Well, and if this be what we recommend to strangers, whence the thought of

inverting the process, when we wish to cure our own diseases ? But it is said, though the forty-shilling freeholds be abolished, and the qualification raised to suppose ten or twenty pounds, you will still have a great number possessed of the elective franchise. This supposition is unfounded ; you will have but a small number, and they more corrupt than the lowest class now are. Freeholders then will be of that description of farming esquires who are always looking for some situation or place for their children or friends, the hope of obtaining which will supersede in their mind every other consideration. They will be the most corrupt class of electors in Europe ; just as much so as the Irish electors were before the extension of the franchise to Catholics. These men, moreover, will revive amongst us the class of middlemen, the worst description of oppressors that the curse of Cromwell has produced in Ireland. The peasantry, who are now regarded as something by the proprietors, will be cast out of their holdings, and either left to perish on the highways, or subjected to the torture of these middle-men ; a torture with which I am well acquainted, and which is the most cruel

that has ever been inflicted on any people, unless upon the Irish and the slaves in the West Indies.

“ The taking away a vote is the taking away a shield which the subject has not only against the oppression of power, but that worst of all oppression, the persecution of private society and private manners. No candidate for parliamentary influence is obliged to the least attention towards them either in cities or counties : on the contrary, if they should become obnoxious to any bigoted or malignant people amongst whom they live, it will become the interest of those who court popular favour, to use the numberless means which always reside in magistracy and influence to oppress them. The proceedings in a certain county in Munster during the unfortunate period I have mentioned, read a strong lecture on the cruelty of depriving men of that shield on account of their speculative opinions.” These are the words of Mr. Burke, a name and an authority which all revere.

But the present system produces perjury and immorality. It does ; and there is no man in Ire-

land laments these evils more than I do ; but are they to be removed by reducing still more the Irish peasant in the scale of political existence ?—by increasing to an incredible extent the number of paupers ?—by throwing the famished population into the ranks of Captain Rock ?—by multiplying house-burnings, assassinations, murders, robberies ?—by raising up a class of heartless unrelenting middlemen ?—by scourging the poor, not with rods, but with scorpions ? Are there no remedies for the evils of the country, unless such as have a manifest tendency to multiply and aggravate those which exist ? Is there not in the heart of a freeman something which would make him revolt from the idea of robbing of their birth-right half a million of subjects, and plunging so many men who have still a hope of improvement, into a state of irremediable servitude—of hopeless despair, blotting their names for ever from the book of the constitution ?

No, Sir, if the system of governing Ireland be altered, and above all, if the Catholics be emancipated, and a provision by law made for the

poor, the state of society will rapidly and surprisingly improve; the freeholders will become more independent, more enlightened, more moral; and these qualities will banish perjury and corruption, as far as they can be banished, from elections: they will render this class of men, now so much reviled, the most virtuous electors in the community; for persons of their class enjoying a competency, are uniformly religious, independent, and just. In my Letter on the Increase of Population, I endeavoured to show that this increase in Ireland is not such as to excite any just apprehensions; and it is my full conviction, that if covenants, prohibiting the sub-division of farms, were introduced into leases, and enforced; if a well regulated system of poor's laws were established; if the country were pacified, and industry protected and encouraged, that the elective franchise, as it now exists, so far from increasing pauperism or immorality, would be the great basis of our future prosperity, and the immoveable bulwark of our freedom.

But it is said that the forty-shilling freeholders

are now brought to the hustings like cattle, and that they exercise no liberty in giving their votes. This is true of many of them; but what would be their condition if they could not vote? In place of forming the herd of the nobleman or wealthy commoner, they would be the lean, and haggard, and emaciated cattle of the middlemen; and these middlemen would decide the election by pounds, shillings, and pence, as they would dispose of their bullocks at Smithfield.

But it is not universally true that the forty-shilling freeholders are driven like cattle to the hustings. The proof of this is found not only in contested elections, but also in counties where there is no contest, and where no man will offer himself as a candidate, whether it be Cavan or Galway that is to be represented, without avowing his sentiments to be in accordance not only with those of the gentry, but also with those of the forty-shilling voters. They already have power, and it is the very exercise of this power which has contributed to raise an outcry against them. It is a power at present only in its bud; every

friend of civil liberty should shield it from the blast which might now destroy it; he should protect it with all his might, as the very palladium of Irish rights; and the Englishman who does not wish to see all hope of improvement in the state of the representation of his own country cut off, should rally round the weak and defenceless free-holders of Ireland. If they be sacrificed to the ambition or selfishness of the British aristocracy, or to the vengeance of the Irish Orangemen, the cause of civil liberty throughout the empire will receive the deepest wound which has been inflicted on her for a century,—a wound from which perhaps she may not recover.

The chief cause of the perjury, of the immorality and abasement of the forty-shilling freeholders, arises from their being obliged either to perish with their families, or swear to a freehold where they have no interest whatever. In thus swearing, they do evil, like Pilate; but the man who drives them to the cruel alternative of perjury, or death by famine, has a greater sin; his guilt is incomparably more grievous. But if to reme-

dy those evils you disfranchise the miserable serf, you thereby directly decree his expulsion from the wretched hovel of his fathers, to make room for some more solvent or improving tenant, who will unite in one the several holdings of the then deserted village. But what will become of the population thus ejected and abandoned? Are they, with their wives and children, to die upon the scaffold, or perish on the highways? Is the legislature to become insensible to the cries of humanity, or will it pass an act to depopulate the country, or to fill it with rivers of blood? I should hope not. I should expect that if it were resolved to pluck up the root of our liberties, some mode of doing it would be devised other than that of disfranchisement.

I have alluded to a well-regulated system of poor's rates. Yes, that measure which, after the repeal of the penal laws, would tend more than any other to the pacification of the country, and which in a few years would improve the value of every species of property in Ireland; which would more than indemnify the proprietor of land for the apparent loss he would sustain by it. This

measure would operate directly to the prevention of perjury, and the creation of independence, amongst the class of persons we are treating of.

The peasant who would have a provision for his famishing children secured to him by law, were he justly entitled to it, would not hesitate to surrender his holding to the landlord, rather than perjure his soul, or adjure the Deity to attest a lie; and the landlord, knowing that if he did not allow him a *bona fide* interest of forty shillings a year as a freeholder, that he would be burthened with his support as a pauper, would not hesitate about the alternative he should adopt. But it is said to the Catholic, " Surrender the elective franchise, and we will grant you emancipation."

Hitherto it has been argued, that as we possessed political power by this very franchise, we were entitled to eligibility to office, as it was an anomaly to grant a power and withhold the right of exercising it. This argument is equally sound and judicious; but what becomes of it now, when it is proposed to withdraw the power, and concede the

right to exercise it ? These are weak expedients ; they are the shifts and subterfuges of men whose short-sightedness or injustice will not allow them to view the entire question fairly and candidly. But why address such language to the Catholics ? When we ask for emancipation, do we ask for a boon, or do we not seek for a further restoration of our natural and long-lost rights ? Why speak to us of trafficking our inheritance—of selling our birth-right perhaps for a mess of potage ? Why oblige us to buy back our own property, to exchange a certainty for an uncertainty, to surrender one right, and that the foundation of every other, in order to gain a something which may or may not be valuable ? If emancipation were not a part of an improved system of government, it might be granted, and rendered as inoperative as the law which entitles us to the freedom of corporations. Suppose the spirit of a Perceval to invade some stupid log of clay, and that by chicane, intrigue, or a knowledge of family affairs, aided by some popular outcry, such a one placed himself at the summit of the treasury, that he had the exchequer, and of course a majority of both

houses of parliament, at his back, what would be the use of emancipation to men who had no political power?—what would be the use of it compared with the elective franchise, by the exercise of which alone such a living being as I have described could be made to fear a loss of office, and compelled, not by a sense of right, but by self-interest, to act justly? The Catholics should not listen to any such proposal; they should hold fast what they have, and trust to God, to their own exertions, and to the justice of the legislature and of their own cause, for the attainment of what is withheld.

Catholics have often been accused of not keeping faith with heretics; and Pitt and Duigenan, to gratify the bigotry of England, obliged them to abjure this abomination upon oath. The charge is no longer made against them; but they can retort it with a vengeance upon England, for she has repeatedly broken faith with them. One shudders, whilst reading Irish history, at the uniform and sacrilegious violations of honour, honesty, and truth, which are recorded against those who

administered the power of England in this country. The most recent, though not the most flagrant, of these occurred at the period of the Union; and whilst it continues unrepaired, I do hope it will be the last on the record. I should rather suffer injustice and wrong than be the dupe of any man; the former might be inflicted on me by force, but to the latter I would myself become a party; and a feeling of wounded pride at being overreached by my adversary would be the most bitter ingredient in the cup of my affliction. No! I would expect that if it were proposed to the Catholics to barter the elective franchise for emancipation, that they would indignantly reject the unworthy compromise. I do hope they are intelligent, and can see that this franchise is the germ of Ireland's greatness; that they are generous, and will not betray the interests of their fellow-subjects with their own; that they are patient, and will labour for the attainment of all their rights; and that they will transmit to their posterity the best blessing bestowed on them by a gracious monarch, and by those great men of their own country, who by their labours, as memorable as their patriotism and

talents, raised their helpless brethren from a state of abject servitude, to a position from which they can at least descry the temple of the constitution.

I have the Honour to be,

Dear Sir, &c. &c. &c.

J. K. L.



LETTER XI.

ON A LEGAL PROVISION FOR THE IRISH POOR.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN Cicero had returned from an honourable exile, and was allowed to plead his own cause before the nation to which he belonged, he adduces as a justification of what some persons blamed in his conduct, those feelings of human nature of which no good man, however wise and virtuous, can or should divest himself. "*An ego poteram,*" he says, "*cum a tot rerum tanta varietate divellerer inficiari me esse hominem, et communem naturæ sensum repudiare?*" I feel whilst writing these Letters that I, without comparing myself with the great man now mentioned, owe to you and to the public a justification of my own

conduct in discussing at such length questions foreign to my profession, and in which it might appear unseemly that I should be engaged; but besides that, in the several Letters which I have written, but especially in this, I am labouring as the advocate of the poor, of the unprotected, and of the distressed; I can ask with Cicero, how could I fail to be interested in the general agitation of religious and political, civil and ecclesiastical interests; or how could I be insensible to the general impulse of our nature? St. Paul himself exclaims, "*Quis infirmatur et ego non infirmor, quis scandilizatur et ego non uror.*" In every nation a clergyman is separated from society only that he may labour the more efficiently for his fellow-men, and his duty of administering to their temporal wants is not less pressing than that of devoting himself to their spiritual concerns. The one ought to be done by him, and the other ought not to be neglected. There are times and circumstances when he is justified—nay, when he is obliged to mix with his fellow-countrymen, and to suspend his clerical functions whilst he discharges those of a member of society. I myself have once been placed in such

circumstances, and devoted many a laborious hour to the service of a people engaged in the defence of their rights and liberties! The clerical profession exalts and strengthens the natural obligation we are all under of labouring for our country's welfare; and the priests and prophets of the old law have not only announced and administered the decrees of heaven, but have aided by their counsel and their conduct the society to which Providence attached them. In the Christian dispensation priests and bishops have greatly contributed to the civilization and improvement of mankind: they have restrained ambition, they have checked turbulence, they have enlightened the councils of kings, and infused their own wisdom into laws and public institutions. Arts and sciences are their debtors; history and jurisprudence have been cultivated by them. They have been the teachers of mankind, and have alone been able to check the insolence of power, or plead before it the cause of the oppressed.

The kingdom of which we are ministers is not of this world; and should we at any time neglect

our duty to our great Master who is in heaven, or abuse the ministry with which we have been intrusted, to the prejudice of men; we declare ourselves prevaricators, and of the worst description; but in labouring for the public welfare in our capacity of citizens or subjects, in pleading the cause of the widow and the orphan, in seeking to obtain justice for the aggrieved, or relief for the distressed, we are only imitating the conduct of HIM who went about doing good, and of those glorious men who have preceded us in exerting all their energies, and employing all the resources of their mind and talents, in seeking to increase the scanty stock of human happiness, or to diminish the burthen of our common misery. You will, therefore, allow me to plead the apology of Cicero, whilst I trouble you with some reflections on the expediency of making a legal provision for the Irish poor.

The bare mention of poor's rates has excited a general sensation in Ireland. They are considered at first view as a heavy tax on all proprietors; hence that class of persons are alarmed. They

would be considered as bringing relief to the distressed Irish, who are chiefly Catholics, and on that account are distasteful to the Orangemen. They are thought by many to operate unfavourably to industry, and to encourage indolence: this consideration weighs with the more judicious part of the community. It is generally supposed that they would contribute to accelerate, rather than to check, the increase of the population: on this ground all the disciples of Malthus are opposed to them. I am of opinion that the objections to their introduction in this country entertained by each of the above classes, with the exception of the second, who are not to be reasoned with, are not well founded, and that effects the reverse of those which are apprehended would follow from the establishment of a well-digested system of poor's rates in Ireland. But before I proceed to discuss the objections thus started, I will sketch some general views of the nature and justice of a State providing in some definite way for those individuals of the community who are unable to provide for themselves.

The earth and the fullness thereof belongs to the Lord, and he has created thereon an abundance of necessaries, or even of luxuries, for the use of all. He has vested in the descendants of Adam some of his own rights, by appointing them with an unrestricted dominion to rule over every living thing, and to appropriate to their own use the several productions of the earth and sea.

In contemplating man unconnected by any social agreement with his fellow-men, we behold him a sovereign in his own family; the prince, the priest, the legislator, and the judge of his own household. This view, presented by reason, is like to that furnished to us by divine revelation. In such a State, the head of a family would be a monster did he not provide for such of his children or dependants as happened, through any dispensation of Providence, to be unable to provide for themselves.

The laws of war and of peace, of hostages, prisoners, slaves, of property, of commerce, are easily deducible from the relations which must co-

exist with, or proceed from, the several gradations of society, as they have grown up from the union of many families or tribes; but it is clear that however they may have been moulded as they advanced, the original principle of providing for every member belonging to the community must have lived in them, unless where, from circumstances, men degenerated into a savage state. This state of semi-brutal existence, which we call *savage*, is not a state of nature; for he who is made to the image and likeness of God, and upon whom the light of the divine countenance is sealed, is naturally intelligent, provident, religious, and civilized.

Passions left unrestrained in the primeval state, have often eclipsed the light of the soul, and hurried whole families and tribes into that state in which men were found in America, and in which millions of them still continue in many parts of the globe. But in treating of a state of nature, these savages who have placed themselves without its pale, though they retain many traits of humanity, are not to be contemplated; and whether they de-

stroy the helpless parent or infant, or whether they share with them the spoils of their enemies, the fish from the lake or the fowl from the desert, their conduct should not be referred to as an argument when we consider what, in a civilized society, are the rights of the poor. I take it to be a truth not liable to be controverted, that a social state is natural to man, that he was created and intended for it by Almghty God; nor do I see any inference more clearly deducible from this principle, than that every community, whether large or small, is obliged to provide for such of its members as by the visitation of God, the ordinary laws of providence, or the working of social institutions, are rendered unable, whether physically or morally, to provide for themselves. It is also manifest that the legislature or executive power in a State, which is charged with securing such provision, should, in the spirit of its enactments for this purpose, consider itself as discharging a duty which partakes more of a domestic than of a civil arrangement, and should not suffer the poor's laws to partake at all of a political character: they should be

directed to the hearts of families, rather than to the general economy of the State.

It has been often asserted that the poor have a strict right to be supported, whether by their own industry or at the expense of those who hold in property the entire goods of the community. This is my opinion also; but I doubt whether I arrive at this conclusion by the same reasoning which other men adopt. I feel that it is not only a dangerous, but also an unsound doctrine, to tell the poor man that he has in any case a right to his neighbour's property; because this announcement induces him to believe that his right is founded, not on *distributive*, but on *commutative justice*; it thereby encourages him to commit theft, and to do so in circumstances condemned by the law, and not justified by natural equity. He has, in my opinion, a right to his support; but it is one which, as a general rule, it may be said it is never lawful for him to enforce. He has a right to get, but not to take; a right to be supported, but not a right to extort his support. His right is founded on the obligation his richer neighbour is under

of supplying his great or extreme want. *Si non pavisti occidisti*—“ If thou hast not fed the poor man, thou hast murdered him,” is a saying consecrated by a usage of 1400 years; it was addressed by St. Ambrose to individuals, but it applies not only to them, but also to the State; and if the heads of the community omit, when necessary, to provide for the poor, we may address them, saying, “ *Si non pavisti occidisti*.” The care of the lives and well-being, as to food and raiment, of each member of the community, is perhaps the first obligation of those who are charged with the care of it; it is not less sacred or less binding than that of waging war in self-defence; for this duty arises only because men have a right to preserve their personal and social existence, and the person or persons whom they may have placed at their head is bound to preserve this existence by waging necessary wars: but if this existence be endangered or wasted in the persons of the poor, he who should arm the community to defend them if attacked by enemies, should assess this same community, if necessary to do so, in order to preserve their health or their lives.

It is not necessary that maxims or conclusions so clear—nay, so evident, should be supported by facts ; but yet it is satisfactory to consider, that every civilized State whose proceedings are recorded in history, appear to have recognised them, and reduced them to practice when the wants of the people required it to be done.

The Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, had a legal provision for the poor; and when the Almighty condescended to dictate a code to the Children of Israel, he was careful to encumber the inheritance he gave them with a support for the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger.

If in a State there be no certain provision for the poor, whether such provision arise from religion, or nature regulated and directed by law, the State itself is far removed from being perfect ; it is like either to the United States of America or to Ireland ; to America, where, from the abundance of land and employment, the poor require no assistance which the kindness of nature will not sufficiently supply ; or to Ireland, where the Govern-

ment has been a step-mother, unkind when not cruel to the children who looked to her for bread.

I have said above that the poor's laws should partake more of the spirit of a domestic than even of a civil code; that they should be directed to the hearts of families, rather than to the general economy of the State. This opinion flows from the principle to which I refer the obligation of providing for the poor, namely, that of a head nourishing and cherishing the members of its own body—of a father supplying the wants of his own children and domestics. The poor to be provided for do not form a class having a political place in the community; they are a class, but a class of persons, feeble, destitute, or unable, from some cause, to be useful to their fellow-subjects. A class connected with certain towns, with hamlets, with villages, with families, with houses; a class who have been nurtured amongst the other members of the community, and who are still connected with them by a thousand ties, by numberless recollections.

The poor are thus attached intimately to every part of the community ; they draw from it almost insensibly a sufficiency to sustain life, except in times of distress, when they fall off and perish. The ties which connect them are from nature, and should not be broken ; much of their support should always be derived from voluntary offerings. This source alone should be made to supply a competency to the feeble, to the weak, to the aged, to the infirm, to the ordinary objects of human compassion, as well as of Christian charity. The poor's laws should not dry up this source, or break this connexion ; they should stimulate and regulate the donations, and cause religion to consecrate them, as it does in Scotland, where the chief fund for the relief of those who are habitually indigent, arises from the collections made on Sundays at the place and at the time of divine worship. The laws should not turn away the benevolent housekeeper from seeking out and relieving in the abode of misery the old servant who had nursed her perhaps in her youth ; but they should so regulate matters, that these acts of benevolence or Christian charity should lighten

the burthen on the community, and thus excite the best feelings of the heart to co-operate with the best interests of the State.

Compulsory support should be enacted by law, to be had recourse to only in times of more than usual distress, or for such persons as might happen to have their habitual employments suspended by some reverse or accident likely to be remedied or removed.

These are general observations, however, and it is time to pass to the consideration of the question which concerns us, namely, whether in Ireland a legal provision should be made for the poor?

If it be proved that in every civilized State such a provision should exist in some shape or other, there is at least a strong presumption in favour of its introduction to Ireland. Indeed, I am of opinion that there is not, nor has not been hitherto, a nation in Europe which requires so much, or

so justly, that a provision be made for its poor, as Ireland.

The subversion of the Catholic Church Establishment, and the existing difference of religion amongst the people of this country, are the causes why laws are so necessary to provide for the maintenance of our poor.

Allow me to trace these causes, or at least one of them, to its source. When Christ revealed his law to men, he also purified their hearts, and sanctified by his grace, or by the influence of his morality, whatever of human nature remained undraped. Benevolence, or good-will and sympathy towards the distressed who are connected with us, were implanted in our breasts by HIM who made us; and when we formed society, they grew up with us, and became, as we have seen, one of our most sacred duties. This duty among savages was lost in a chaos of passion, but amongst pagans who were civilized, it had become weak—yielding gradually to pride, avarice, and selfishness—vices which grow up with civilization, as

weeds grow most luxuriantly in the richest and best cultivated soils. The Redeemer, who reformed man, making him a new creature, sought to revive within him the natural benevolence and compassion of his heart; and in order to do so the more effectually, he not only commanded him “to lend, hoping for nothing therefrom,” but promised him mercy in the other world, and the remission of all his sins, if in this life he were merciful to the poor. He assured him that by giving alms abundantly, he could purchase up all his iniquities; and the more firmly to engage him to perseverance in this godly work, he took the poor under his own special protection, calling them *blessed*, and through his Apostle designating them as *rich in faith*, and *the heirs*, almost exclusively, of *the kingdom which he had purchased for them*. He thus changed that excellent virtue of benevolence, or compassion to the poor, into a most heavenly one, making it the very bond of Christian perfection, and the exercise of it a certain passport to heaven. *The practice of this duty was always founded in justice, and in a justice of the strictest kind*; but the Son of God converted it into an

exercise of mutual good-will ; he called it charity, and annexed to it the most distinguished privileges and rewards. All his followers are bound to the practice of it ; and in proportion as they are diligent in its exercise, they approach nearer to himself, and receive more abundantly of spiritual benedictions—of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven.

From this renovation of our moral feeling by Christ, it has followed as a necessary consequence, that those of his followers who professed to lead lives of more than ordinary perfection, and to devote themselves to the service of God and their neighbour, exercised this virtue of charity as the principal duty of their lives. The Clergy, in a word, who have ever been considered as the imitators of Christ—as discharging an embassy for him amongst men—as the teachers of his doctrine, and the dispensers of his mysteries—as the husbands of the widow—the fathers of the orphan—the friends and companions of the poor—the Clergy have not only exercised this virtue by their own labours and with their own substance

but they have, on account of their character and office, been selected by States, by Princes, by rich and powerful individuals, as the ministers of *their* charity to the distressed. They have been appointed the great almoners of the Christian world, and for this purpose vast funds and immense possessions were placed at their disposal. This Clergy of the Catholic Church have been accused of many faults; but in no nation or at no time, not even by the writers of the reign of Henry the eighth, have they been charged with betraying this sacred trust, or embezzling the property of the poor. In Ireland, above all, where their possessions were immense, their hearts were never corrupted by riches; and whether during the incursions of the Danes, or the civil wars, or foreign invasions, which desolated the country, they were the Clergy who repaired the ravages that were committed, rebuilt cities and churches, restored the fallen seats of literature, gave solemnity to the divine worship, and opened numberless asylums for the poor. Whilst Ireland, though a prey to many evils, was blessed with such a Clergy, her poor required no extraordinary aid; the heavenly virtue of charity

was seen to walk unmolested over the ruins of towns and cities, to collect the wanderer, to shelter the houseless, to support the infirm, to clothe the naked, and to minister to every species of human distress ; but "*fuit Ilium et ingens gloria Dardanidum!*" When the ancient Religion was expelled from her possessions, and another inducted in her place, the church, and the hospital, and the cabin of the destitute, became alike deserted, or fell into utter ruin. This change, with the others which accompanied or followed after it in Ireland, threw back all our social and religious institutions into what is generally called a state of nature—a state such as Hobbes describes it, in which men are always arming or engaged in war. Clergymen (so called) still appeared amongst their fellow-men; but they were no longer " of the seed of those by whom salvation had been wrought in Israel ;" they did not consider it a portion of their duty to be employed in works of mercy, or to devote the property which had passed into their hands to those sacred purposes for which it was originally destined. They were, like the generality of mankind, solely intent on individual gain,

on the support or aggrandizement of their families, but totally regardless of those sublime virtues or exalted charities which the Gospel recommends. They found themselves vested with a title to the property of the poor ; they did not stop to inquire whether they held it in trust ; there was no friend to humanity who would impeach them for abuse, and they appropriated all, every thing to which they could extend their rapacious grasp. The churches were suffered to decay, and the spacious cloister or towering dome, through which the voice of prayer once resounded, became for a while the resort of owls and bats, till time razed their foundations, and mixed up their ruins with the dust. The poor were cast out into the wilderness, and left, like Ismael, to die ; whilst Ireland, like the afflicted mother of the rejected child, cast her last sad look towards them, and then left them to perish. These men “ate the milk, and clothed themselves with the wool, and killed that which was fat ; but the flock they did not feed, the weak they did not strengthen, and that which was sick they did not heal, neither did they seek for what was lost ; but they ruled over them with rigour and with a

high hand!" They could not be blamed; they had a title and a calling different from their predecessors; and the State, from which they derived their commission, could not infuse into them virtues which can only emanate from Christ. The power which placed them here, found them men encumbered with wives and families, and it could not expect to break in sunder ties which are too close to be separated, too strong to be divided. This Clergy might have formed a body useful for other purposes; but they were totally unfit, on account of their domestic cares and engagements, to be intrusted with dispensing charity between the State or individuals and the poor.

In England and Scotland, as well as here, the monasteries were no sooner demolished, and the Church establishments transferred from men who professed to follow Christ, to those who undertook to serve two masters, than the cries of the destitute resounded from one extremity of these kingdoms to the other. These cries in England soon attracted attention, and the poor having been rebuked for breeding, and some efforts to impose

sterility or silence on them having been tried in vain, the poor's laws were enacted, and a community, already harassed by impositions, were assessed, that the widow and the orphan, and the aged and infirm, might be suffered to prolong their existence.

In this unhappy country, however, where the poor have hitherto been considered as less than men, and their wants and destitution utterly disregarded—where their extermination was long sought for, and every method of persecution which human ingenuity could devise, or the most refined malice inflict, been exhausted upon them; in this country, where oppression of the poor might call to heaven for vengeance, but found on earth no ear open, or heart expanded to complaint; in this country their patrimony became monopolized by prescription in the hands of its possessors, and the State continued insensible to all their wants. Not only did charity cease to be exercised, but the religion which enjoined it became, and continues to this day, by a strange perversion, to dry up the sources of human benevolence, and to alienate the

affections or harden the hearts of those who should be bountiful to the poor. These are the chief causes why a legal provision for the poor of Ireland is more necessary than a similar measure in any other civilized country on the earth. The observations here made would of themselves be sufficient to warrant this inference, but an experience as to what has occurred, and is annually occurring in Ireland, proves to a demonstration both their truth and their justice.

The evidence already given to parliament shows that the average wages of a labouring man in Ireland (and the great mass of the poor are labourers) is worth scarcely THREE-PENCE A DAY !! Three-pence a day for such as obtain employment, whilst in a family where one or two persons are employed, there may be four, perhaps six others, dependent on these two for their support. Good God ! an entire family to be lodged, clothed, fed, ON THREE-PENCE A DAY ! less than the average price of a single stone of potatoes ; equal only to the value of a single quart of oatmeal ! What further illustration can be required ? why refer to the naked-

ness—to the hunger of individuals? why speak of parishes receiving extreme unction before they expired of hunger? why be surprised at men feeding on manure?—of contending with the cattle about the weeds?—of being lodged in huts, and sleeping on the clay?—of being destitute of energy, of education, of the virtues or qualities of the children of men? Is it not clear, is it not evident, that the great mass of the poor are in a state of habitual famine, the prey of every mental and bodily disease? Why are we surprised at the spectres who haunt our dwellings, whose tales of distress rend our hearts—at the distracted air and incoherent language of the wretched father who starts from the presence of his famished wife and children, and gives vent abroad in disjointed sounds to the agony of his soul? How often have I met and laboured to console such a father: how often have I endeavoured to justify to him the ways of providence, and check the blasphemy against heaven which was already seated on his tongue! How often have I seen the visage of the youth, which should be red with vigour, pale and emaciated; and the man who had scarcely seen

his fortieth year withered like the autumn leaf, and his face furrowed with the wrinkles of old age! How often has the virgin, pure and spotless as the snow of heaven, detailed to me the miseries of her family, her own destitution, and sought through the ministry of Christ for some supernatural support, whereby to resist the allurements of the seducer, and to preserve untainted the dearest virtue of her soul! But above all, how often have I viewed with my eyes in the person of the wife, and of the widow, of the aged, and the orphan, the aggregate of all the misery which it was possible for human nature to sustain! and how often have these persons disappeared from my eyes, returned to their wretched abode, and closed in the cold embrace of death their lives and their misfortunes! What light can be shed on the distresses of the Irish poor by statements of facts, when their notoriety and extent are known throughout the earth. Might it not detract from the picture of it, which must be present to every reflecting mind, to state, that in a parish with which I am connected, consisting of about eight thousand souls, not less than three hundred and thirty-

seven families were relieved as public paupers during the last year; and that probably one-half as many more, who would prefer death to the public exposure of their distress, suffered for nearly two months all the horrors of extreme want? How will it illustrate the extent or nature of our distress to state, that in another parish, with which I am equally well acquainted, six-sevenths of the population subsisted for months of the last year either on alms or on one scanty meal of the most wretched food; and that the furniture of their houses, their wearing apparel, and nearly all the moveables they possessed, were sold or pledged to provide them with this pittance! * No; these facts, and such facts as these, were they alone adduced and substantiated as proofs of the want of any people in Europe except the Irish, they would fill every mind with horror, and every heart with compassion; they would not fail to excite the favourable attention of the rulers of such a

* The last summer was one of little more than ordinary distress; that which is approaching is not likely to be much more abundant with the poor.

people, and insure to the sufferers a certain relief. But Ireland, always unhappy—always oppressed, is reviled when she complains, is persecuted when she struggles; her evils are suffered to corrode her, and her wrongs are never to be redressed! We look to her pastures, and they teem with milk and fatness; to her fields, and they are covered with bread; to her flocks, and they are numerous as the bees which encircle the hive; to her ports, they are safe and spacious; to her rivers, they are deep and navigable; to her inhabitants, they are industrious, brave, and intelligent, as any people on the earth; to her position on the globe, and she seems to be intended as the emporium of wealth, as the mart of universal commerce; and yet, but no, we will not state the causes, they are obvious to the sight, and to the touch; it is enough that the mass of her children are the most wretched of any civilized people on the globe.

That in a country so abundant as Ireland there cannot at any time be a dearth of provisions, is

almost certain: that by a system of poor's laws these provisions would be prudently and justly distributed, so as to prevent the recurrence of famine in the midst of plenty, is a truth which cannot be contested: that God and Christ, and the nature of society, as well as the circumstances of Ireland, require that some legal provision be made for our poor, seems to me to be also sufficiently obvious.

If indeed the evils arising from such provision would be as great as those we now endure, or if the distresses of the poor could be relieved by any other means, then I should cease to be the advocate of poor's rates. But as I am of opinion that every municipal measure for the improvement of Ireland will be slow, if not inefficient, unless this be previously or simultaneously adopted; and as I think the evils now apprehended from their introduction will not follow from them; nay, as it appears to me that a well digested system of poor's laws would lay the foundation of numberless advantages to Ireland, I shall proceed to discuss the

objections which are made to their introduction, and in doing so will unfold my own views with regard to them. This discussion will occupy a second Letter.

I have the honour to remain,

Dear Sir, &c. &c.

J. K. L.



LETTER XII.

THE SUBJECT OF THE FOREGOING LETTER CONTINUED.

DEAR SIR,

IT is objected to the introduction of poor's laws in Ireland, first, that they will operate as a heavy tax on all proprietors and occupants of lands and houses. Secondly, that they would tend to encourage indolence, and to check industry, or individual exertion. Thirdly, that the population, already superabundant, would be still further increased by them.

Before the difficulties thus proposed be admitted as insuperable, or rejected as undeserving

consideration, it is necessary to lay down at least the outline of a system for the support of the poor, that it may be seen how far these difficulties bear upon it, or whether it might not be so devised as to obviate altogether, or gradually remove, the obstacles now opposed to it.

I do not well understand either the theory or the operation of the English poor's laws; they are complex, and partake, I think, too much of the nature and spirit of general municipal laws; they seem to me to be too far removed from that domestic and family character which should be imprinted on them. On this account I leave them out of view. The Scotch poor's laws are of a better kind, and could, in my opinion, with some accidental alterations, be easily fitted to Ireland. If in this country, as in Scotland, the ministers of religion in each parish, with such laymen, to be elected annually, as might be deemed by the legislature most suited and best entitled to co-operate with the Clergy, were empowered by law to ascertain the character and wants of the resident poor, to verify their claims to parochial assistance, and

to dispense to them from the parish fund what would be necessary for their relief or support; the first effect that would follow from the labours of such a committee, would be the exclusion of all impostaors or vicious characters, and the application of the public charity to the real objects of compassion. A second effect would be—to deprive the indolent and vicious, or undeserving, of the hope of subsisting on the public bounty, and thereby compelling them to draw upon the resources of their own labour and industry. This labour and industry of theirs would also be thus added to the stock of public wealth, whilst the number of persons claiming to be relieved would be considerably diminished; the spectres of human misery, now so appalling, would no longer be found in the streets, or on the highways; and the din of distress, the murmur of wretchedness, the heart-rending scenes of misery, which we now witness, would not continue to afflict the hearts of the humane, and to disgrace the Government and the nation.

A committee of such persons as I have mention-

ed, knowing the means of the parishioners, acquainted with the characters and habits of the truly deserving poor, their connexions, and the efforts, if any, by which they could assist themselves, would neither permit the extreme of want to reach them, nor would they pamper them with better food and raiment than the circumstances of their benefactors could afford.

These men would know the poor persons who were fed or clothed by some humane benefactor, and could thus make the private charities of individuals available to the public good ; they would act as mediators between the distressed and the charitable, providing for the wants of the former, and securing from abuse or misapplication the donations of the latter.

Then as to the funds which would furnish to such a committee the means of effecting so much good.

The first source from which these funds should be drawn (and this in Ireland would be

large and almost inexhaustible) should be the voluntary offerings of the faithful, on all Sundays, at their respective places of worship, like as in Scotland; which collections, to be permanently productive, should be made by the clergy or overseers themselves. I am satisfied that if the concerns of the poor were regulated, the extent and nature of their distress clearly ascertained in each parish, and their support enjoined by a municipal law, that these collections alone would be so considerable as to meet the ordinary claims upon them. This expectation would not appear unreasonable when we take into account the small pittance upon which an Irish pauper can subsist; the reduction which would take place in their number by the exclusion of those who would be deemed undeserving; the consideration weighing upon the mind of the community, that what they bestow will be frugally dispensed, and that if they do not support the poor through charity, they will be obliged to do so through necessity; but above all, when we consider the natural tenderness, the innate piety, the expanded charities, of the Irish heart.

To the raising of this fund there lies but one objection ;—but one which, if not removed, would be insuperable ; and it is this, that Roman Catholic places of worship are now built, kept in repair, and their current expenses defrayed, out of the collections made at the time and in the manner above mentioned ; and that these collections also, in some places, particularly in towns and cities, form a principal part of the income of the Clergy.

The means of removing this difficulty are simple and obvious : let the laws which provide for keeping the churches of the Establishment in repair, and supplying them with necessaries, be amended, and when improved, be extended to the Catholic places of worship ; and thus, besides doing an act of justice and public utility, and one well calculated to conciliate parties now conflicting, one of the greatest obstacles to the establishment of a legal provision for the poor will be removed. Then as to such of those collections as are appropriated to the use of the Clergy, these might be easily commuted for an equivalent to be paid by

the parish in some other shape, if the time should not have arrived when a regular provision could be made for, and accepted of, by the Catholic priesthood.

Whenever the fund arising from the voluntary contributions of which I am treating, would be exhausted, as might happen occasionally in various places, and even generally, in times when a dearth of provisions or want of employment would produce more than ordinary distress ; then the committee or trustees of the poor should be enabled to provide for them, by allocating the labour of these latter at the ordinary rate of wages, or at a higher rate if rendered necessary by the price of provisions—in such manner as would be most conformable to the public good, to the wants of the labourers, and to the ability of their employers. The committee should also be empowered to levy by assessment from off the parish, according to a fixed scale, whatever sums of money would be necessary to provide for the usual claimants on the parochial fund.

The money thus raised by assessment, as well

as that paid by the persons who employed labourers at the requisition of the parochial committee, should, in my opinion, be charged in equal shares to the account of the proprietors of lands and houses, to the occupants of the same, and to the person, whether lay or ecclesiastic, who received the great tithes of the parish, or any equivalent for them, unless such tithes were utterly abolished. In this latter event, so devoutly to be wished for, the proprietor and tenant should share between them the burthen of supporting the poor, if their ancient patrimony, or an equivalent for it, were not secured to them from some other source. In order to simplify the mode of thus partitioning the amount of the assessment, the receipt of the parish treasurer, as well as his certificate of the sum to be paid by persons employing labourers at the requisition of the parochial committee, should pass as cash for one-third of their amount, both to the receiver of rent, and to the receiver of tithe, or of the composition in lieu of tithe.

Such an enactment would also admit conveniently of a clause whereby proprietors absent

from the country would be made to contribute more than the resident landlords, by subjecting the former to the entire of the burthen which would be equally divided between the latter and their tenantry. Thus a reasonable mulct would be imposed on absentees for not fulfilling the duties of good citizens, and some compensation would be made to their tenants for the want of that protecting influence, that salutary example and encouragement of good order and industry, which a proprietor owes to his countrymen and dependants.

The Clergy would, no doubt, complain at the proportion of expense which I would be anxious to see imposed on them until tithes would be abolished; but I hope confidently that whosoever considers the nature of their calling, the duties of their ministry, the original and sacred character of the patrimony intrusted to them, will not sympathize in their feelings. I do not wish to recur to the extent of their possessions, or to the total want of proportion between what they receive from the public, and the services they render to the community; neither do I wish whilst treating on

this subject, to represent the absurd anomaly of a man paying a tenth of his substance to a minister of religion whose creed and ministry he conscientiously rejects.

In towns and cities where tithes, or an equivalent for them, are not paid by the majority of those on whom the burthen of supporting the poor would principally fall, I am of opinion that great discretion might be vested in the parochial trustees (if no more certain method could be devised) to levy, in such manner as would appear to them most equitable, that part of the parochial assessment which in other places should be borne by the receiver of tithes.

Having thus unfolded, in a general way, my views of a legal provision for the poor, I come now to examine whether it would operate as a heavy tax on the proprietors and occupants of lands and houses. I think it would not; and I am also of opinion, that the additional burthen, if any, which might be imposed on them, would be productive of infinite advantage to the country; that every

species of property would be improved by it ; and that, in its effects, it would repay with usury for any small sacrifices which in the commencement it might require.

I have assumed upon no slight grounds that the real objects of charity being ascertained in each parish, the number of claimants for relief in ordinary times, indeed at all times, would be considerably diminished. I have also supposed that charitable donations, stimulated, as they would be, by self-interest and religion, collected also with diligence, and providently applied, would nearly, if not fully, answer all the demands which would be made upon them, except in seasons of sickness and distress. If this opinion be admitted as probable, and that it deserves to be so estimated, I think few will deny who are, as I am, intimately acquainted with the state of the country and the character of the people ; but if it be admitted, then the proprietors, and land or householders, are only to be assessed in times of unusual distress.

But when such times occur at present, now that

there is no provision for the poor; are not the same classes burthened with the support of them? There is indeed this difference, that at present the real object of distress is often neglected, whilst the clamorous impostor is relieved. Virtue is left to pine away in solitude, whilst vice, with its brazen front, extorts support. There is at present no method, no order, no regularity, no fixed rule for dispensing relief. The very existence of distress is unknown to some, is doubted of by others, whilst its victims are hourly perishing. Want of information, of previous arrangement, of classification—in fact, a want of method and system, produces the greatest disorder, and frequently operates injustice in administering relief to the necessitous. All these inconveniences, at least, would be obviated, if there existed in every parish a legal body charged with the interests of the poor. Again:—at present, when distress becomes general and urgent, contributions must be raised; but they are often raised from the bounty or piety of those who can least afford to make sacrifices, whilst the miser, the ungenerous, the hard-hearted, withhold their aid, or dole it out with so much pain and penury as to

render it of little use. The proprietor also, who happens to be a resident, is overwhelmed with demands upon his bounty ; whilst the absentee leaves the poor to the care of some heartless agent, who seems often in the intensity of his perverseness to laugh at their destruction.

Would it then, let me ask, be an additional burthen, or rather would it not be an equitable distribution of the present burthen, to assess by law, and according to a well-digested system, those very sums which are now extorted by the cry of distress from the charitable and humane, whilst those who should in justice be the most generous are totally exempt from the common contribution ?

But admitting that at all times, and in all places, an additional burthen is imposed on property ; besides, that the laws of nature and of God ordain that the distressed members of the community should be supported by those who possess abundance, will the introduction of poor's rates be productive of no social advantages ? Is it no ad-

vantage to a nation to redeem its character, and save thousands of its inhabitants from death by famine? Is it no advantage to raise the character of the lowest class in the community to some sensible degree in the scale of existence? Is it no advantage to rescue the virgin from prostitution—the parent from despair? Is it no advantage to prolong the life of our fellow-creature to the term fixed for it by Almighty God? Is it no advantage to turn away the child from theft, from lies, from disobedience, from deceit? Is it no advantage to purify from filth and rottenness the dwellings, the board, the bed, of the Irish pauper? Is it no advantage to enable even the dregs of the people to acquire some education, so as to enable them to discern between vice and virtue? Is it no advantage to point out to the starving labourer or artizan some resource in the hour of need, to turn him away from that rapine, violence, and murder, in which distress has prompted him but too often to engage? Are these no advantages? And if they be, are they not worth being purchased at some expense?—do they not deserve that we should make some sacrifice to obtain them, even though

such sacrifice were not commanded both by justice and religion ?

But I have said that an improvement in every species of property would follow from the introduction of poor's rates.

This consequence would, it seems to me, certainly and speedily follow from them. The reason is, that these poor's rates would create employment, and by creating employment would augment capital ; capital and labour combined would improve lands ; the improvement of land, above all in Ireland, would give an impulse to internal trade. Let these results only be admitted, and no person will deny but that every species of property is improved by them.

The employment of the poor, in the first instance, will impose expense on the proprietor and occupant ; but if the soil of Ireland can be rendered twofold as fertile as it is—if immense tracts of it are still to be reclaimed—if our modes of husbandry are still rude and capable of immense im-

provement—the man must be short-sighted indeed who cannot see that any system which would augment labour and stimulate to the adoption of an improved system of agriculture, must necessarily tend, and not remotely, to the advantage of the proprietors and occupants of the soil of Ireland.

But this is not, perhaps, the principal channel through which the expected improvement would be found to flow. No ; if it flowed through this channel, it would rush through another. If the poor in Ireland were secure from extreme want—if they were certain of a resting-place in this wilderness of life—if they were only assured of always obtaining a bare sufficiency of *necessaries*, they would be put at ease ; they would no longer be a reckless people ; they would not sink into apathy or despair ; they would cease to meditate on schemes of revenge, or to combine against individuals or against the law ; they would no longer seek comfort in imaginary prophecies or revolutions ; they would sit down contented with their lot, and feeling that the State “had care of

them," all their affections would be directed to it. Even the religion from which they are now turned away, as from the creed of persecutors, would appear to them, if not amiable, at least it would cease to be viewed with horror ; they would not any longer confound even its name with the name of an unrelenting foe.

What would be the consequence, supposing the laws equalized to every religion, and the poor thus provided with bread ? A new ruler would seem to descend to them from the heavens, and they would greet the perpetuity of his reign, "*talia secla currunt.*" The Irish people would acquire a new and settled character ; their native talents and energies would shine forth ; peace, security, and mutual good-will, would prevail universally ; they would penetrate even to the darkest haunts of the Orangemen, and we would become a great, a free, and a happy people. In such circumstances, let me be allowed to inquire, would not capital flow into Ireland ? would not manufactorys be established ? would not labour be in requisition ? would not the improvement of

all property, of all classes and conditions of the people, surpass the ordinary calculations of men? These hopes may appear to you, perhaps, too sanguine; but when you reflect on the character of our people and the resources of our country, you will admit that they might be realized.

Another advantage which I conceive would follow from these which I have noticed, is a great amelioration of the condition of the forty-shilling freeholders, and a corresponding degree of virtue and independence, which would of itself remedy the abuses amongst that class, which at present we all lament. The certainty of not seeing themselves and their families reduced to the necessity of either perishing on the highways or living by plunder if ejected from their tenements, would free them from the moral necessity, to which at present they are sometimes exposed, of committing perjury, in order to retain possession of what they call their freehold. The landlord also would hesitate before he added to the demands upon his property by increasing the number of paupers; and the public interest and opinion being opposed

to his doing so, would check even the ardour of his resentment. It is also to be observed, *that if the great question of emancipation were once disposed of, such differences of opinion between landlord and tenant as we have before alluded to, would seldom or never occur, and we would not have to witness such painful exhibitions of corruption and perjury, disgraceful alike to the master and the slave, as have not unfrequently been presented to our view.*

But what would operate most effectually in raising the character of these forty-shilling free-holders is, the improved state of society which would follow from the equalization of the laws, and a legal provision for the poor; these free-holders would become men of intelligence, possessed of some property, of security, as well as of a virtuous independence, and would in truth form the noblest basis of a fine and well-ordered community which could be found in any nation of Europe.

The next objection to the introduction of poor's

rates is founded on the supposition, that they would operate as a check to industry, and an encouragement to indolence.

In reply to this, it should be sufficient to observe, that men in a state of extreme depression, such as that of our poor at present, are devoid of energy, and nearly incapable of exertion ; it is the man who possesses something who is found to make efforts either to preserve or to increase his little store ; but when he is reduced to the lowest ebb of misery, he becomes listless, a kind of apathy spreads itself over him like a night-mare, and he finds himself incapable of making any movement. Look to the savage, as described by Robertson, who presents him to you as totally heedless of to-morrow ; look to the slave until he gets a little patrimony, and you find him sleeping away his leisure hours. But turn to the tradesman or peasant who has obtained some little degree of independence, and like the bee when storing her hive with wax or honey, he is all busy, diligent, active, and industrious. Horace says, *crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit,*

and his maxim is applicable not only to misers, but to the whole mass of mankind, the foolish and prodigal alone excepted ; it is a disposition founded on one of the first and strongest propensities of our nature, which constantly urges us to acquire and to accumulate the goods of this world. To suppose then that a man who is raised from a state of extreme want to a place where he can exist, and exert his energies, that he will then become indolent, is to argue against experience and the laws which have been written on our hearts. But it is to be observed by those persons who put forward this objection, that none of the ordinary stimulants to exertion would be withdrawn from the poor by such a provision as I would recommend to be made for them. What are these stimulants ?—First, a becoming self-respect, which urges men to decline receiving a gratuitous support, and which would be lessened when such support would be assigned by the law. Secondly, a different and base disposition, which would lead a man to decline labour whilst he could otherwise obtain bread. But in the system of which I have sketched the outline, no person would be entitled to receive

aid whose distress and merits were not previously ascertained by those persons who, of all others, would be the most competent to judge of them. In this system, if some persons, trusting to the beneficence of the law, neglected to exert all their own energies in endeavouring to earn a livelihood, they would, on preferring their claim, find themselves not only disappointed, but rebuked; and such as would be favoured could not fail to know that they received their food more from the hand of charity than from the arm of the law. But as to persons able to earn their support, it is clear that in the plan proposed, that support would be given to them only as the price of their labour, and it would be in vain for them to controvert before the committee the maxim of the apostle—“If any one does not labour, let him not eat.” This objection I consider to be fully and satisfactorily answered.

The next obstacle opposed to the making a provision for the poor is founded on the notion that it would tend still further to increase our already superabundant population.

That our population would not be found even *abundant*, I am firmly convinced, if the resources of the country were drawn forth, and capital and industry employed upon them; and as to its increase, I have already shown that if at present there be any increase it is scarcely perceptible.

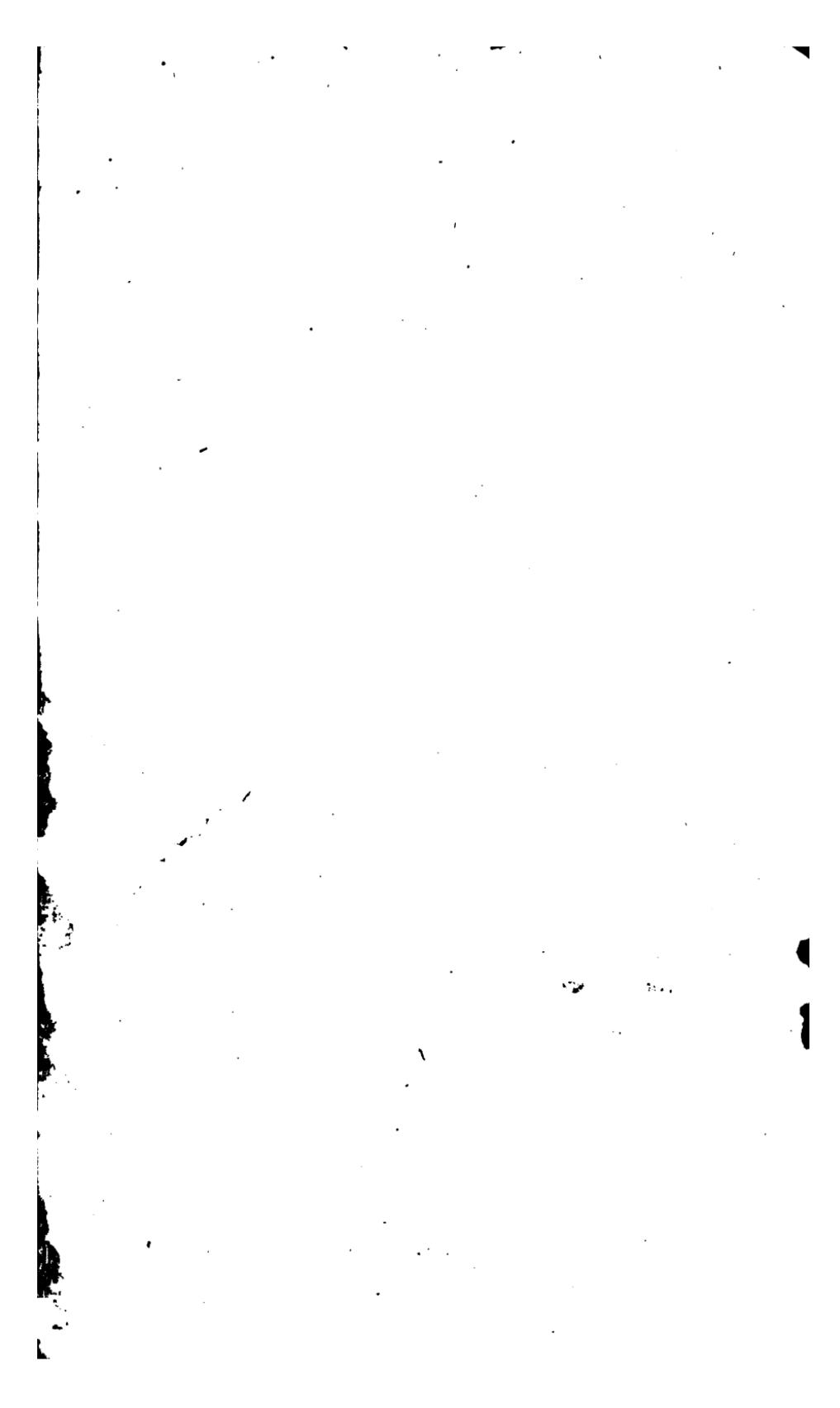
But admitting that the population is superabundant, and even that it would continue so after a reformation had taken place in the state of our society, and when the improvements which I contemplate as likely to result from a few legislative enactments, would appear in our trade, commerce, manufactures, and husbandry; admitting this superabundance of labourers still to exist, would it be likely to increase still more by a provision being made for the poor? I think not. I, who am daily and hourly conversant with the poor and with the middling classes of society, find that early and improvident marriages occur amongst the former much more frequently than with the latter. I have noticed this in a former Letter, and pointed out the causes of it: they are such as will be found to operate universally; so that in or-

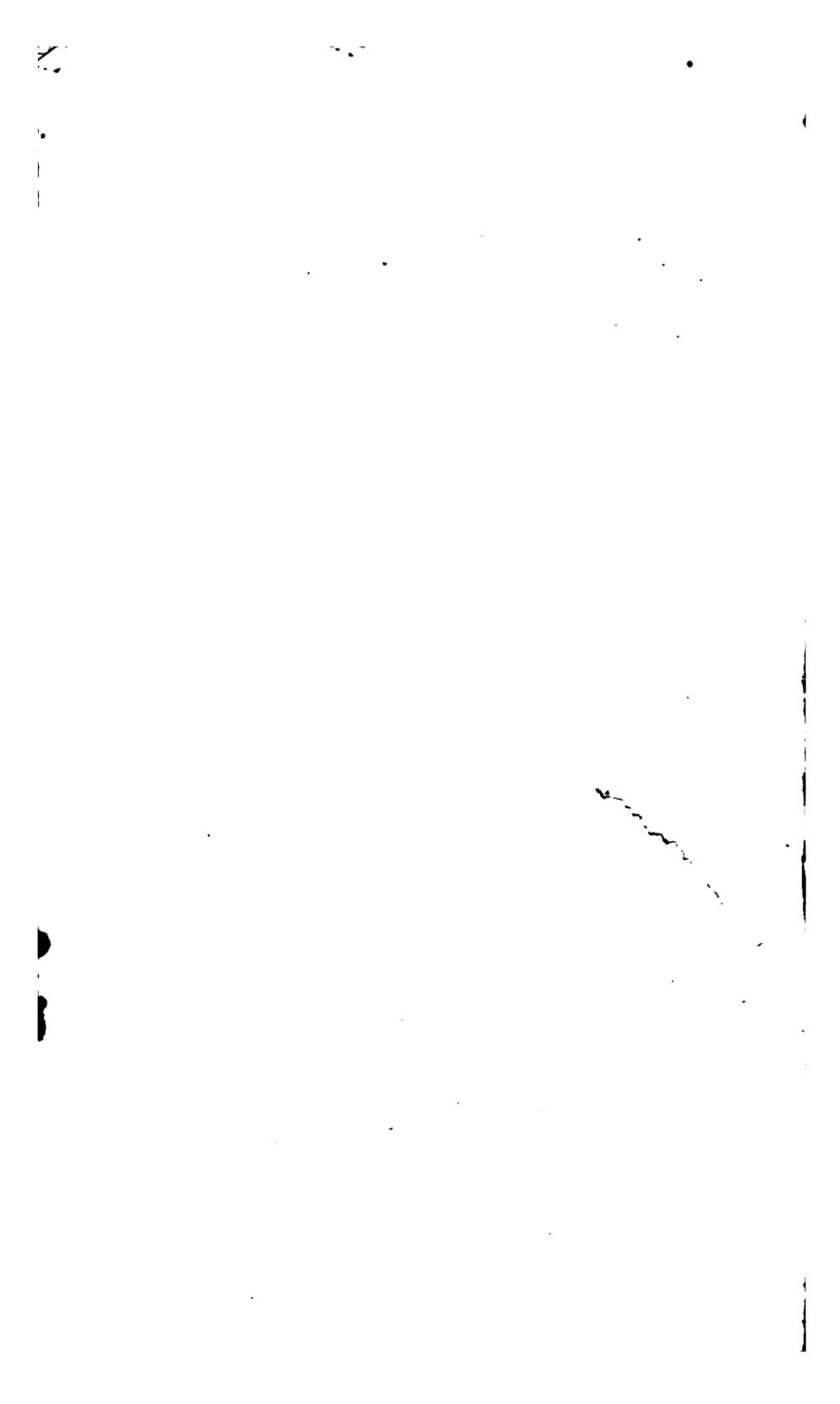
der to check this supposed evil, no remedy could be devised more effectual than to raise somewhat the condition of the poor. But as the prevailing error on the subject of the population must be shortly dissipated, I think it unnecessary to dwell further on an objection connected with it; and which I could not refute without seeming to consider it as deserving of attention. I shall therefore conclude these observations on poor's rates in Ireland, by assuring you, that next after the repeal of the penal laws, I consider their introduction amongst the very best measures which could be adopted for the pacification and improvement of this country, and the strength and security of the empire.

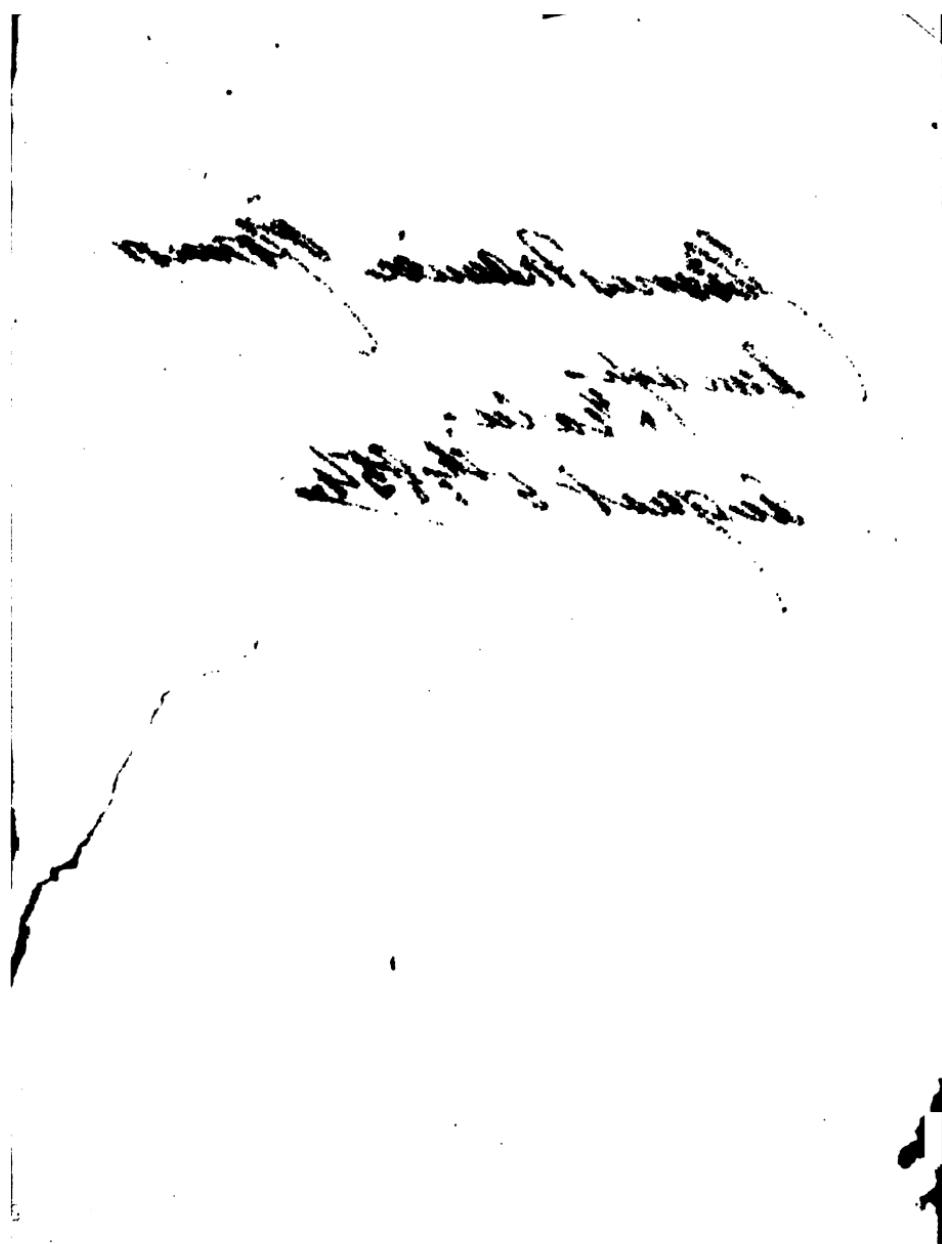
I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir, &c. &c.

J. K. L.

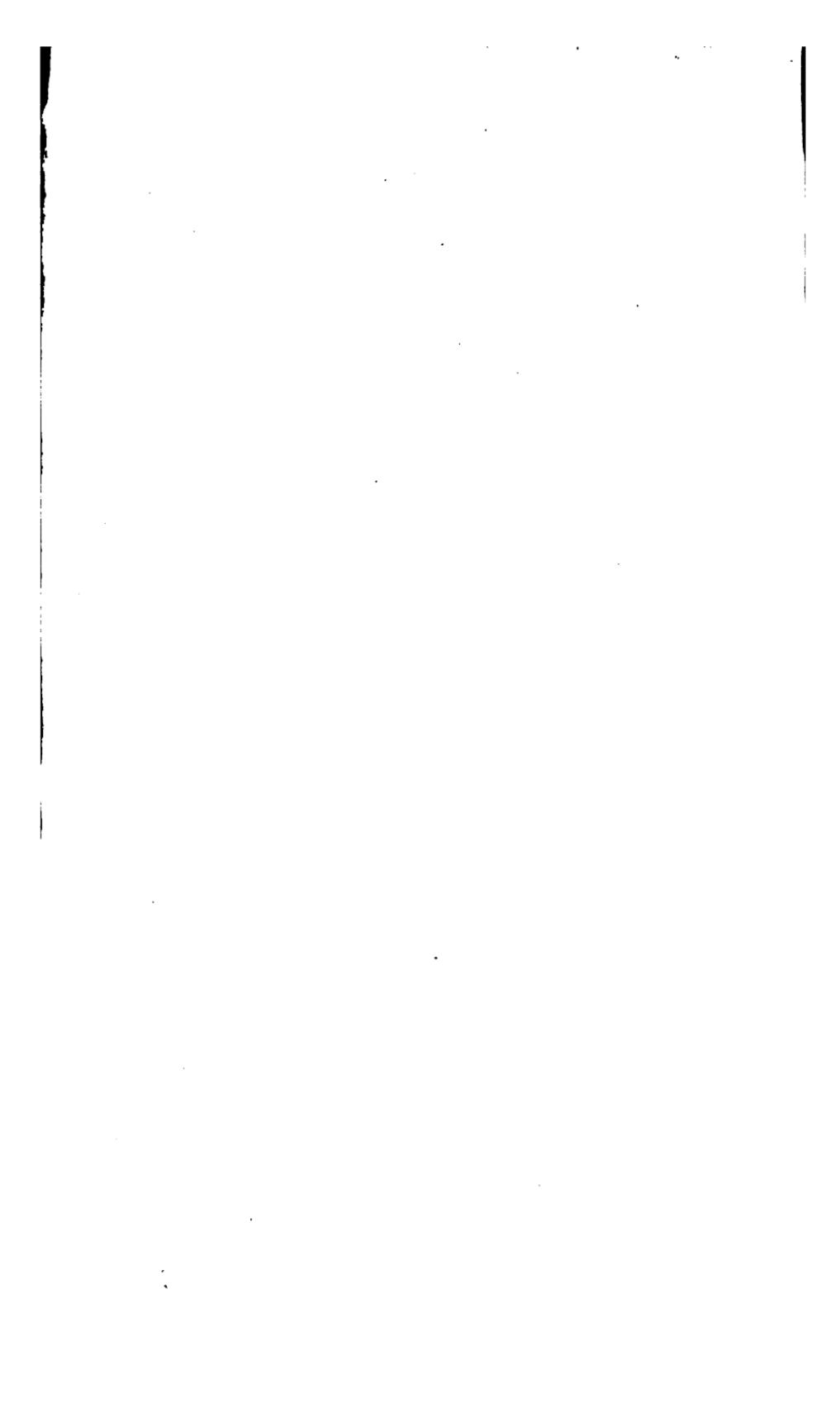






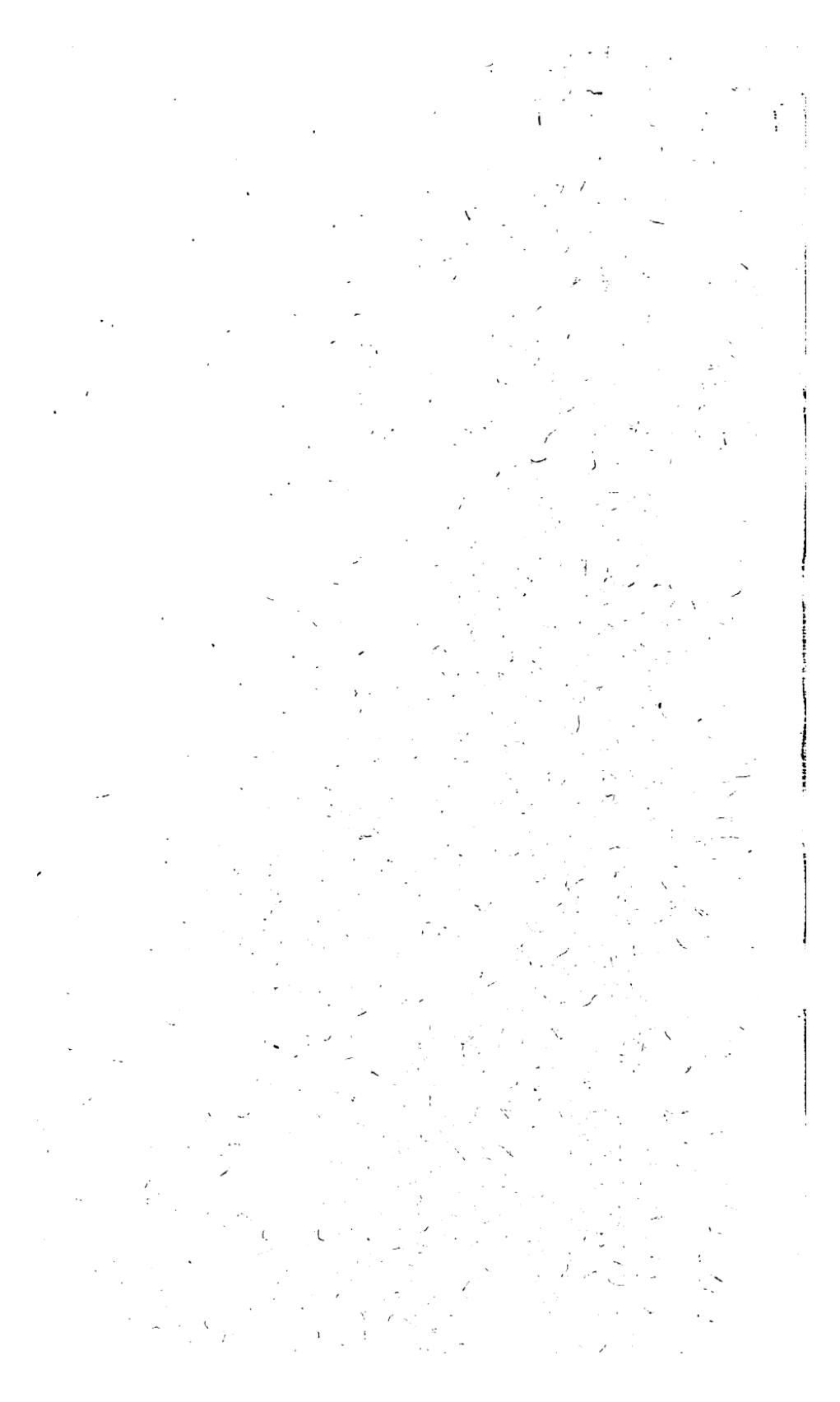
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